

AUDIOVISUAL PERFORMANCE AND VIDEO WORK EXPLORING THE CONVERGENCE
BETWEEN ABSTRACT VISUAL MUSIC AND THE MOVEMENT OF DANCE

Arch of Neo

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ABSTRACT	
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Abstract Arch of Neo (AoN) is an audiovisual performance and video work exploring the convergence between abstract visual music and the movement of dance. The practical part of the thesis consists of the documentation of the live audiovisual performance and two video works. The production part can be found on the accompanying DVD as movie files. The main objective of the thesis is to explore methods of creating visual counterpoints and analogies to the music of AoN. The other main objective is to look at convergence of the movement of two art forms, dance and abstract visualization, and examine how these two expressions could work together in creating a novel combination of moving image and sound. The written thesis situates AoN within the conceptual framework of Vjing and visual music. The visualization of AoN differs in terms of narrativity in the two medias it is presented. The imagery of the dance is prevalent in the video works and the abstract in the performance. The combination of dance and abstract moving image explores the issue of fragmentary identity. The performance of the work examines the aspects of synchronization in real-time audiovisual performance.	
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1. Introduction

Arch of Neo (AoN) is an audiovisual performance and video work exploring the convergence between abstract visual music and the movement of dance. The objective of the thesis is to explore methods of creating visual counterpoints and analogies to the music of *AoN*. The second main objective is to look at the convergence between the movement of abstract visualization and the movement of dance. The thesis work consists of the production of *AoN* and the accompanying written part.

The production part is presented on the attached DVD and consists of two parts. The first part contains two short video works and the second part a documentation of a live audiovisual performance. The written part of the thesis work examines the different stages of the production, and situates the work within larger context of audiovisual culture by looking at preceding works and relevant contexts. The thesis evaluates the aesthetics, thematic, and technological aspects of the work.

1.1 Extended Description of the Project

The thesis work explores the visualization of music with moving image through the specific qualities of the production *AoN*. The music of *Arch of Neo* fluctuates between various modern bass music phenomenas. It draws from underground dance

aesthetics and edges on the experimental structures of electronic music. The visualization takes as its starting point the musical aesthetics of *AoN*.

The main objective of the work is twofold, firstly it examines the integral expression of music with moving image, and secondly it explores the convergence of the movement of abstract visualization and the movement of dance. The thesis work looks at the two art forms, abstract moving image and dance, and examines how these two expressions work together and what kind of synergies can be found from exploring the merging of them?

The work itself is manifested in two different formats, as a live performance and a series of short videos which can be distributed on various platforms. The practical part of the thesis work consists of two short videos and a documentation of one specific performance of the piece. The written thesis work explores the thematic and technological qualities of the visualization of *AoN* and situates the work within a larger context of audiovisual work.

The visualization work of the *AoN* can be roughly divided into two parts, to the representational and abstract material based on the movement of dance and to the purely abstract material, though these two are often intertwined. Thematically the representational visualization explores the issues of identity and societal structures. The human body, moving or still, always carries meaning in relation to

its surroundings. In the visual imagery of *AoN* the dancer/body is separated from the physical space and the spatial aspect of dance is cut out. The character of the dancer is placed in the same world as the abstract visualization and the points of convergences are expressed with digital manipulation of the imagery, and also with the physical movement of the dancer. How does the expression of the dancer coincide with the movement of the abstract digital imagery?

The thesis explores the formation of two different dancer characters with different aesthetics. It also explores the implementation of these characters into the non-narrative audiovisual whole of the performance. What are the thematic concerns behind the dancer character and how is the character seen relation to the development of the other abstract visualization of *AoN*?

In the performance setting the narrative fragments surface to the visual stream in a few selected sections/songs, leaving the whole largely abstract. The narrativity of the visualization in the performance is a less important element than its ability to convey a feeling or mood of the music. The visualization in the performance aims to create its own expression that connects to the music through synchronicity.

In the linear video works the dance material plays a more significant role, and in them the thematic concepts are expressed in a more concise form.

The video works take as their starting point the movement of the dancer and through digital manipulation transform the imagery into a dialogue between the two movements, that of the dance and that of the digital imagery itself.

The thesis explores also the specific qualities of *AoN*'s real-time visual performance system which allows the real-time generated or pre-rendered visual material from two separate artist/sources to be used simultaneously in a multiple screen set-up in synchronization with music.

1.2 The Structure and Methodology of the Written Thesis

The written thesis situates *AoN* within a larger context of musical visualization. The term visual music has steadily gained more prominence in the last decades. Visual music is generally seen to encompass numerous contemporary practices dealing with dynamic or linear expressions of music as well as being associated with several historical trajectories of visual art dealing with pictorial expressions of music.

The thesis maps out the conceptual framework of visual music and VJing in chapter 2. The chapter also looks at the work of Len Lye and Klaus Obermaier in detail. Len Lye is one of the early practitioners of visual music, a term linked to specific historical and contemporary practices of visual and audiovisual art. Klaus Obermaier's work extends from performing

arts to music and theatre and new media. His use of dance and dynamic visuals is seen as one important influence on the visualization work of *AoN*.

The main part of the written thesis is the account of the work process behind *AoN*. The current project is a result of many years of collaborations where the previous projects can be seen as direct precursors to the work done on *AoN*. The basic concepts of both the thematic ideas and performance technology specific to *AoN* were laid out already in these earlier projects. The production process is outlined in the chapter 4.

The reflections on the implementations of the thematics into aesthetic form is explored in the chapter 5.

Chapter 6 concludes the work. It gives an overview of the work done, its points of success and things that would have possibly benefitted from different approach or further work. A summary of interviews with three key collaborators expand the evaluation of the work.

1.3 Motivations

I have been working with visualization of music actively since 2003 on numerous productions. I have also acted as co-organizer/curator of audiovisual program in the Pixelache Festival of Electronic Art and Subcultures between 2006 and 2009. In recent years, I have been working increasingly with video design and visualizations for stage productions of dance, theatre and opera.

Working on *AoN* has allowed me to concentrate my efforts on developing the aesthetics of the combination of the imagery of dance and abstract visualization. I have worked on these issues also with the previous works with dance, but the difference has been that in those works the dance has been leading element on which the visualization has been built on. With *AoN* dance is the element that is built on the concept and ideas of visual art piece. This approach was not only interesting to me personally but the enthusiasm was also shared by Anniina Jääskeläinen, the choreographer/dancer of the work.

An important motivation for the work has also been the need to map out contemporary music visualization practices and to situate my own work within this context. I have previously explored historical trajectories and current frameworks of audiovisual practices within various projects and curatorial endeavors, but have lacked the right context to expand this search into sufficient and personally satisfying scale. The work on *AoN* and its framing has allowed me to outline starting points for further academic work.

1.4 My Role

The overall production arch of *AoN* stretches over the span of several years, during which the ideas and themes have changed around a few times. Prior to beginning the production of *AoN*, the main working group did a number of projects together. The work processes of these productions are discussed briefly in chapter 3.

Before any sound or visual material was produced, the main working group worked together extensively in the beginning of *AoN* on scripting and concepting. During the whole production of *AoN*, the main group behind the work kept in close communication, so the visual artists had an influence on the musical production and vice versa. My main responsibility has been the creation of the visualization together with Heikki Rynnänen. The dance sequences were produced and directed by me. Tuukka Ylönen was acting as cinematographer on the shooting and planning of the dance material. I also developed the concept of the dance character together with him. I worked extensively with dancer/choreographer Anniina Jääskeläinen in developing the dance character further, and on the choreography.

I have included a summary of the interviews I have done with Anniina Jääskeläinen, Matti Pentikäinen and Heikki Rynnänen in the conclusion chapter. The full interviews can be found in the appendixes. It should be noted that the texts are not direct transcripts of the discussions but are instead based on my notes of the interviews.

2. Framework, Visual Influences and Thematic Background

The conceptual framework of *AoN* ranges across a number of discourses and disciplines. This chapter deals with the framework, visual influences and thematic background of the different aspects of *AoN*. The formal background of *AoN* is situated within the framework of visual music. This chapter begins by situating the discourses around *AoN*, examining the concept of visual music in greater depth. The chapter continues with an exploration of the work of two relevant artists, and concludes by mapping out specific thematic fragments which can be seen influential in the formation of the dance character.

2.1 Situating the work

Throughout the ages, the combination of image and sound and the fusion of music and the visual arts- in short, “intermediality”- have consistently been the subject of extraordinary promises, and they continue to be the focus of such promises today. (Ammer, Daniels, Rainer, Rolig, 2009, 17)

Contemporary views abandon the idea of linearity in art history, where one historical stage or state leads always to the next one in progressive way, and argues strongly for seeing the connections between different historical trajectories as pluralist, relativist and non-linear. (O'Reilly, 2009, 189) I believe that the idea of non-linearity and pluralism are important concepts when trying to situate any art work within a larger framework of historical or contemporary

practices. It can also be argued that from today's perspective, “artistic practice has ceased to be defined in terms of a medium and particular skills or with reference to particular art forms and genres.” (Ammer, Daniels, Rainer, Rolig, 2009, 18).

There have been a number of debates and discussions on the state of the media or new media art theory in relation to general visual art or mainstream contemporary art discourse. The validity of new media art discourse has been questioned, insofar as it has been accused of “self-ghettoization”. At the same time, new media art has also been seen as engaging in very similar formal enquiries as contemporary art discourse. In this thesis, I do not engage in the debate about the separation and convergence of new media art theory and the discourse around (mainstream) contemporary art practices, but rather explore the framework for *AoN* from a multidisciplinary point of view. The framework is bound by various discourses, and aspires to create a background for both the work's formal qualities and its contextual framework thus providing a pluralist view on the work.

Several historical trajectories involving audiovisual art can be seen as influencing and framing *AoN*. Video art, experimental cinema, visual music, music video, club culture, new media art and abstract painting all have relevance in situating the work. The definition of the framework of any multidisciplinary practice usually requires a narrowed down point of view in order to be productive. While I acknowledge that

many other discourses, and strands of influential visual culture (such as the development of music video) would have been equally interesting, those explored in this chapter proved to be most relevant in terms of the work done in *AoN*.

The discourse around the relationship between image and sound has been increasingly abundant during recent years. Various exhibitions and publications have defined audiovisual practices in different ways according to relevant art history trajectories and their specific perspectives on the subject. I feel that the term visual music has grown into relevant and meaningful position. The discourse around it hinges on the borders between new media art and contemporary art discourses. Before exploring the visual music in depth, the following section outlines three specific cultural frameworks which can be seen influencing on the background of the work.

2.2 Cultural Frameworks of the Visualization of *AoN*

This section looks briefly about the concepts of mashup, collage and VJing. The reason for the first two cultural frameworks being accounted here is their influence on the development of the dancer character discussed later in the chapter 4. VJing is one of the main visual culture frameworks affecting and framing my work and also the work done on *AoN* and is one of the key issues addressed in the written thesis.

Mashup, while referring to a number of different “platforms” is arguably used most often today to describe a style of electronic music. Music mashup is, simply defined, a song or larger section of songs consisting of existing materials layered or mixed in a new and innovative way, often creating strangely familiar sounding, but distinctively new piece of music. Mashups often take their parts from popular and easily recognizable songs. The idea of mashup music can be partly traced to sound collage. Mashup has also been an integral part of VJ and audiovisual cultures where it employs similar processes as the musical form.

Collage is a form of art that creates a new forms and compositions from existing materials. It often uses, among others, popular culture imagery, existing artworks or found objects. “It is a medium of materiality, a record of our civilization, a document of the timely and the transitory.” (Waldman)

VJ or VJing is a term derived from the words Visual

Jockey. VJing is an activity involving real-time manipulation, triggering, playing or compositing various image sources into one continuous visual stream. VJs use different software and hardware set-ups that allow them to achieve various possibilities for real-time manipulation of their visual output. The various displays and projections used to exhibit the visual stream are an essential part of VJ culture.

The typical workflow in a VJ software consists of compositing, triggering and modifying playback of visual loops. Typically different compositions, clips or other visualizations are mixed or triggered manually according different musical (or other) parameters which are interpreted by the VJ artist. Video or VJ mixer can be used to mix between two or more visual sources. Different types of MIDI-controllers can be used to modify variable parameters of any particular software. Using a MIDI instrument or controller with VJ-software brings an extra layer of playability to the creation of real-time visuals. The use of generative (often sound reactive) visual systems is increasingly common within contemporary live video practices.

Framing the cultural framework of VJing and identifying relevant historical trajectories often coincides with the debates about audiovisual practice labeled visual music. In the next chapter I will outline some historical frameworks common to both discourses.

2.3 Characteristics of Visual Music

Visualization of music into abstract or narrative forms of pictorial art is a centuries-old tradition which, according to the the seminal visual music theorist and historian, William Moritz, dates back to ancient Greece (Morritz, 1997). (It should be noted that this point of view is centered on the western cultural history.) While it has arguably remained in rather obscure discourse for most of it’s history (or historical perspectives have not deemed it significant) there has been a steady development of various practices associated with the term since the turn of the 20th century. Even more importantly, contemporary visual culture phenomenon, such as the advent of music video and club culture have expanded the awareness of the practice.

The term visual music has steadily gained prominence in the last decades. Visual music espouses numerous contemporary practices as being fundamentally integral, whether dynamic or linear, expressions of music. Visual music is also associated with several historical trajectories of visual art dealing with pictorial expressions of music or sound. During the last decades the number of artists working directly with music in profoundly integral way, (not counting works simply inspired by music) has increased substantially with the availability of new technological tools.

Technological advancements and the availability of new digital tools to ever wider populations has increased the possibilities for artists to create

increasingly complex visualizations of music. The advancement of real-time systems for visual performance has coincided with the increasing use of specific softwares and tools in the creation of computer generated or computer modified representational visual imagery. In addition, the use of narrative and representational imagery in novel ways has increased the width of visual music practices.

In the beginning of the 20th century, painters like Vassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee created abstract paintings aiming at representing musical compositions in pictorial format. They gave their paintings names such as *Composition VII* or *New Harmony* and emulated, for example, musical harmonies in the color compositions of the respective works. Synaesthesia was seen as the key to understanding the link between these two art forms. The main principle of synaesthesia is that “sensory perception of one kind may manifest itself as a sensory experience of another – one example being the phenomenon of seeing color when one hears certain sounds.” (Strick, 2005, 15). The contemporary view on the concept of synaesthesia supposes it has validity only as one model of explaining the relationship between image and sound. “It is particularly presumed that proof of a universally accepted synaesthesia of color and tone does not exist; the attribution of a tone to a certain color always represents only determination without any universally applicable scientific character.” (Friedemann, 2009, 149)

While the contemporary view of synaesthesia undermines its usability for explaining visual music

and interrelation of sound and image, it can be argued that, “...in effect, the idea of synaesthesia served to mediate between music and visual art in the early twentieth century and proved essential to the development of abstraction” (Strick, 2005, 16), and thus should be seen as a relevant historical viewpoint on the discourse around synchronicity between sound and image.

While painting lacked the temporal quality of music, the advent of visual music films in the early decades of the 20th century in the US and Europe fulfilled many of the promises made by earlier practitioners. The experimental films and animations from such artists as Walter Ruttmann, Oscar Fischinger and Mary-Ellen Bute took music as their starting point and expanded the realm of audio in moving image format. Golan Levin sees that the work of these vanguard artists “expanded the language and vocabulary of dynamic visual form, at the time when the language of cinematic montage itself was only beginning to be created and understood.” (Levin, 2001, 30). One of the main artists emerging from this era was Len Lye, whose work is discussed in detail in the next section.

The early practitioners of visual music films were inspirational to a group of artists working in the US from the 1950s onwards. The work of Jordan Belson (who is still working today) expanded the field of visual music into large scale events with extensive projection systems in his *Vortex* concerts series. It should be noted that the aspects of spatiality and performance played an increasingly important role in these works.

Andy Warhol's *Exploding. Plastic. Inevitable*. “mixed music, theatre, film and performance in one grand and total spectacle” (Crevits, 2006, 15). The show created together with Paul Morrissey included a performance by *Nico and the Velvet Underground*, dancers, light shows and interaction with the audience. Interestingly enough in relation to AoN, Warhol projected film and slide imagery on Nico while she was performing.

The movement of liquid light shows in the latter part of the 1960s in US and UK consisted of large scale concert visualization that used a combination of different techniques for visualizing music such as different colored liquids and overhead projectors. One of the best known artist groups of the era was the *Joshua Light Show* who worked with a variety of artists, including Frank Zappa, in the production of large scale projections for live concerts. Edward Shanken sees that, “the desire to combine sound and image to create the experience of synaesthesia reached a culminating point in the mid-1960s, when it became popular fare at rock concerts” (Shanken, 2009, 20). These events explored the spatial and performative elements of visual music further and can be seen as examples of direct precursors to VJ and club culture emerging in the 1980 and 90s.

James and John Whitney created the first computational systems to produce abstract imagery in synchronization with audio. Their work can be seen widely influential and they are often cited as one of the founders of computer graphics. John created the spiral images of the title sequence of Alfred Hitchcock's *Vertigo* and some 10 years later, “special-effects artist Douglas Trumbull borrowed

some of John's techniques to create the 'stargate corridor' sequence in Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*." (Brougher, 2005, p. 133). The implementation of visual music processes and aesthetics into mainstream cinema are perhaps most visible in Disney's 1940 animated film *Fantasia* to which a well-know visual music artist Oskar Fischinger designed several sequences.

Coinciding with the development of linear forms of visual music has been advancements in visual instruments and dynamic visualization systems and platforms. The importance of the instrumental aspect of visual music can be seen as taking a genuine foothold in the recent decades. For the historical examples of audiovisual instruments a good starting point for further studies would be William Moritz's writings and also Golan Levin's thesis work *Painterly Interfaces for Audiovisual Performance*.

From the 1960s and 70s onwards media and video art gained more notoriety and the field of moving image art expanded considerably. The rise of MTV and club culture in the 1980s and 90s also saw the advent of VJ scene, which, arguably brought upon a significant growth in popularity especially in the early years of 21st century. This rise of VJ culture was partly due to the availability and advancement of various hardware and software which lead to several manufacturers to start manufacturing equipment especially for the rising VJ scene.

The roots of VJing exists parallel to those of visual music and it is still an open question how these two definitions can or should merge together. Nevertheless, VJing can be seen as one of the key

visual music practices of the past few decades. Specific qualities to VJ culture include performance, mashup, montage, remix, collaboration, video installation, club culture, projection design, video technology, digital tools and generative art. All of these aspects indicate that VJ culture has a rich cultural background and each deserves meticulous research from the specific perspective of VJing or visual music. An increasing amount of research in various fields of visual music has been done in recent years, and hopefully continues as a growing trend.

It should be noted that coinciding with the rise of VJ culture, has been a clear rise of experimental electronic art, performative video and the extensive use video/animation imagery in the performative arts context. These practices should arguably not be categorized as VJ culture nor visual music as they draw their main point of departure from the performer and belong essentially to their own respective category. Often the artists and designers working in this context also work in practices that are encompassed by the confines of visual music.

One of the most important aspects of visual music or VJ culture in recent years has been the substantial development of the spatial qualities in the use of moving image and architectural projections. These developments have reached increasingly large audiences and media coverage.

Underlining the development of visual music in recent years, both performative and linear works, has been the vast expansion of digital tools for creating and modifying video and animation imagery. Technology has expanded the possibilities for creating visual

material and has also provided whole new possibilities in creating dynamic audiovisual tools/models for performance. The performance system of AoN is discussed in detail in chapter 4.

The extensive mapping of visual music practices is shown to be a vast task not well suited for the scope of this thesis. In the next section, I concentrate on two practitioners of visual music and dynamic visualization influential to the development of AoN.

2.4 The Fusion of Dance and Abstract Movement in the Work of Len Lye

Len Lye's (1901-1980) work expands over several decades and includes visual music films, kinetic installations and writing. His film work is seen as an integral part of the first movement of visual music films starting from the 1920s with Viking Eggling, Oskar Fischinger, Hans Richter, Walter Ruttmann and others.

Len Lye emerged in the 1930s. He "fused the abstract images he made directly on film with representational documentary footage" (Brougher, 2005, 111). Lye's films from 1930s use fast-paced abstract graphical imagery, often mixed and collaged with effected representational filmed material and documentary footage. What is relevant in Lye's work in relation to concepts of AoN are his use of representational imagery mixed with abstraction, his ideas about synchronization of music and image and general ideas about the connection between the movement of dance and the movement of abstract animation.

Model of Synchronization with Music

Roger Horrocks, who worked as Lye's assistant during the last years of his life and career and who is the author of several books on Lye, states that Lye's "aim was not simply translate music but also develop visual ideas in counterpoint – with enough synchronisation to keep the images in step, but enough independence to ensure that the images retained the primary focus." (Horrocks, 2009, 58)



Figure 2-1: Len Lye - *Rainbow Dance* (1936)

What was notable when comparing Lye's work to his contemporaries working with visual music films "Lye's choreographed abstract shapes are not strict synchronizations, but free renderings of music into images." (Rainer, Rollig, Daniels, Ammer, 2009, 62)

These methods can be seen in several of Lye's films. Different visual elements take their points of synchronization on certain frequency, but do not keep the visual synchronization of music and moving image seen, for example, in Oskar Fischinger's films from the same period.

Lye's method of freely interpreting musicality into visual stream arguably predates certain contemporary VJ practices. His method can also be seen as influencing the ideas of synchronization in AoN.

Lye and the Element of Dance

I have been especially influenced by Lye's work *Rainbow Dance* from the year 1936. The film displays fantastic color movement compositions combined with modified live action footage, mainly of one person showed dancing and in various leisure activities. "He used a dancer as his solo actor in *Rainbow Dance*, and drew upon his years of thinking about possible ballet films." (Horrocks, 2009, 64)

It is interesting to note that according to Horrocks "Lye understood dance as dialogues with music and not as simple accompaniment" (2009, 136). Horrocks also notes that Lye used the word "choreography" often in relation to describing the structure of his film or sculptures (2009, 137).



Figure 2-2: Len Lye - *Rainbow Dance* (1936)

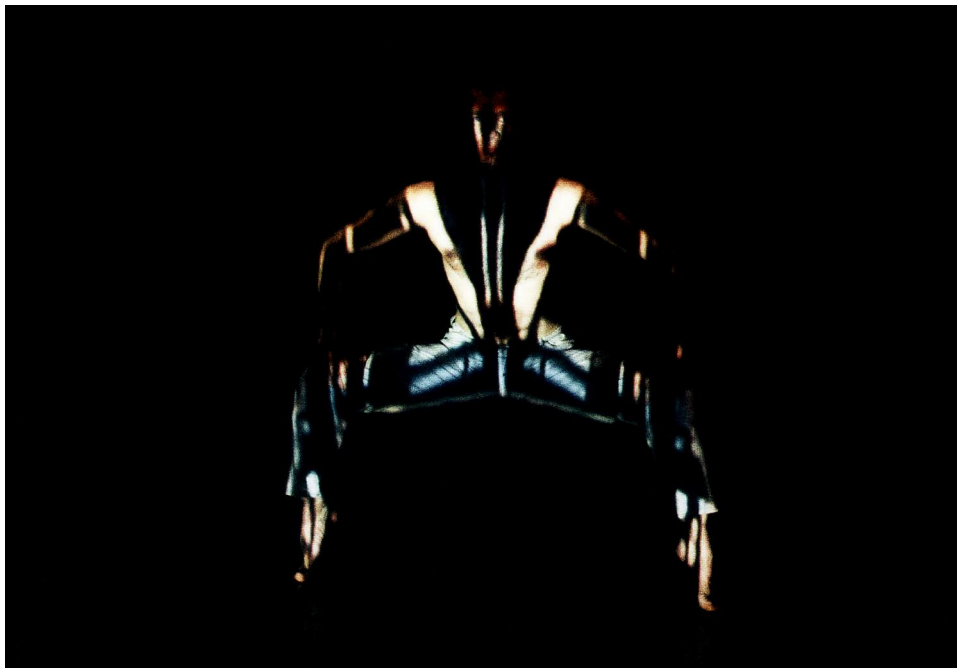
Lye's use of dance music was noted also by Arthur Cantrill, in the article *The Absolute Truth of the Happiness Acid*. Cantrill attended Lye's presentation of his work in Cambridge, UK, in 1968. Cantrill notes about the dance element in Lye's work. "The connection of his art with body movement was underscored by his choice of African tribal, Afro-American or South American dance music to

accompany the films, so prompting the viewer to read the image as a dance of forms and colour." (Cantrill, 2002).



2.5 Dance and Dynamic Visualization in Obermaier

Dance works both as an abstract and representational counterpart of music. Its connection to abstract visual music can be seen from many perspectives. Cornelia Lund notes in her essay *Button Pushing, Egg-Frying, and Other Performative Acts* that “visual music in its ‘absolute film’ guise has repeatedly been used as a kind of paradigm for dance and choreography, it must be seen as being closely associated with a concept of cinematic form of dance” (Lund, 2008, 176). Lund sees similar connection between the movement of the abstract imagery and dance, as is found in the work of Len Lye, working in visual music in general.



In this section I will look briefly at the work of Klaus Obermaier, a contemporary artist combining dynamic visualization and dance. While his work includes elements of visual music, it remains essentially cross-disciplinary. has influenced some elements of AoN’s design.

Klaus Obermaier

Klaus Obermaier has worked extensively with dance/ choreography and new media for more than two decades. I will look at two of Obermaier’s works in detail.

His work *D.A.V.E* together with choreographer Chris Haring was an early exploration of using the body as projection surface for dynamic visualization and through the projections frees the body from its

Figures 2-3 and 2-4: Klaus Obermaier: *D.A.V.E* (1998).

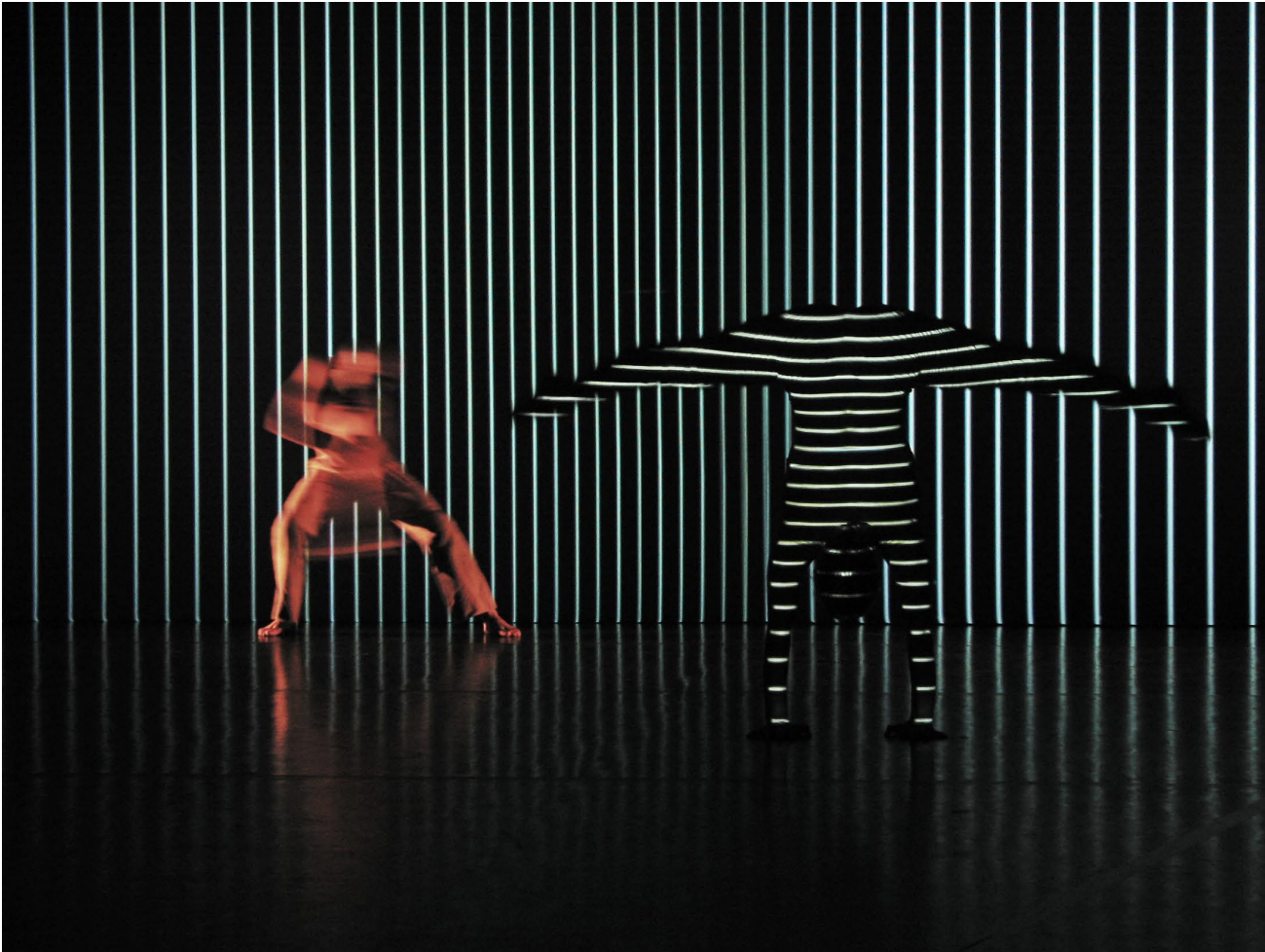


Figure 2-5: Klaus Obermaier - *Apparition* (2004)

physical confinements. The work's strong aesthetics create total redefinitions of the body such as projecting female body on the male dancer, or creating an interactive hearth (Figure 2-3).

Andy Lavender sees the body of Haring in the work as essentially urban. He concludes that "the editing and zoning the image around the torso suggests an irruption of the city's space from within. The hypermedial body digests and exudes the very fabric of metropolitan urbanity" (Lavender, 2006, 59)

The work *Apparition* was first created in 2004 and was touring until 2009.

Obermaier's total fusion of the dancer into a dynamic visualization has influenced part of the dance work in *AoN*. Obermaier's work explores with aesthetic precision and beauty the unseen connections between two dancers and abstract representations of the undefinable feelings of the dancers. These connections and feelings can only be shown through the integration of dynamic visualization in the performance. The piece also raises issues around human relationships to technology and media.

I see the combination of the performing body and dynamic visualization to be an effective model exploring contemporary discourses and concepts. The next section discusses in greater detail the discourses surrounding the subject of body and individual.

2.6 Conceptual Framework on the Dance/Body Issues

In this section I will outline a number of discourses that can be seen as influencing the conceptual development of the dancer discussed in the chapter 4. These theoretical fragments are starting points from which I have drawn in creating the character and are not directly linked to the formal framework of AoN discussed in previously in this chapter.

I see the poststructuralist view of a dislocated, fragmentary and decentred subject interesting in relation to the development of the character of the dancer in AoN. This arguably divided subject is influenced by, “unconscious desires and anxieties, by an interdependent and differential relationship to the world, or by pre-existing social structures” (Bishop, 2005, 13).

Claire Bishop writes in relation to installation art that the,

tension – between the dispersed and fragmented model subject of poststructuralist theory and a self-reflexive viewing subject capable of recognizing its own fragmentation – is demonstrated in the apparent contradiction between installation art’s claim to both decentre and activate the viewer (2005, p. 131).

I would argue that the idea of the fragmentary and decentred subject which also is capable of recognizing its own fragmentation can be traced to the two different representations of the dance

character in AoN. While Bishop talks about the qualities of installation art, the consciousness of identity formation processes are also examined in the thematics of the dancer.

Sally O’Reilly notes in her book *The Body in Contemporary Art* that the boundaries between human body and the world are “blurred and shifting, and often difficult to identify” (O’Reilly, 2009, 8). While a representational character in a video conveys a very different presence of the body than does a live dance performance, there remain some similar qualities between the two. O’Reilly notes that the while the representational pictorial art and “presentational performance obviously possess essentially different qualities, and yet similar ideological, theoretical and aesthetic currents flow through both.” (O’Reilly, 2009, 15)

O’Reilly argues that the clothing and body “are means of proclaiming and identifying difference or solidarity... cultural norms are imposed on the body in innumerable ways: perhaps the form of diet, exercise or manners, or as something less concrete – politeness, or conceptions of beauty or fashion” (O’Reilly, 2009, 77)

It is interesting to note that, in relation to the mashup character discussed in chapter 4, O’Reilly, when talking about portraiture photography, sees that it, “has become increasingly mindful of the fact that there is no fixed, sovereign identity, and of the way one’s self is formed in relation to the world and to other people” (O’Reilly, 2009, 33). In many ways the mashup dancer character can be seen reflecting on the ideas of fluid and ever changing identities.

The idea is expressed through clothing, movement materials and digital manipulation of the video image.

The conceptual development of the dancer character of AoN is discussed further in chapter 4.

3. Earlier Work Setting the Thematic and Technological Background

There exists a number of earlier works before *AoN* for which I have collaborated with different combinations of people from the main working group. These works have all contributed in their own way to developing the aesthetics and the technical solutions of *AoN*.

3.1 Collaborations with Matti Pentikäinen

During 2006 and 2007 I did a number of audiovisual performances with Matti Pentikäinen as part URB Festival and URB Tour, both organized by Kiasma the Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki. These performances utilized MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) synchronization of audio and video which we further explored with *AoN*.

The aim of our synchronization was to create a system for audiovisual sequencing with the combination of audio software (Ableton Live) and live video or VJ software (Modul8). We created MIDI tracks, sequences of MIDI notes, in Ableton Live that formed the basic visual sequencing in Modul8. These tracks triggered visuals in pre-determined composition layers in Modul8. Thus for a number of songs we had a composed sequential visual structure that was in synchronization with music, and was modifiable in



Figure 3-1: Performing on the Mbar terrace with Matti Pentikäinen, August 2007.

real-time. In the live situation, I was able to choose which pre-determined parts would play and also to create multiple layers of real-time generated manually triggered visual layers on top of it.

The main thing that I was developing during the collaboration was the possibility of creating sequence-based live visualizations. By sequence based visualization, I am referring to a convergence of more “traditional” VJing, video editing and the creation of electronic music compositions with loop-based music sequencer. Where as the workflow of a VJ software is usually based on live triggering/compositing -method (where a live composition is created from a set of material/clips), the Ableton-based sequencing system provides the user the ability to create a pre-defined set of compositions that can be played in sequence. The MIDI track keeps the editing in synch with the audio by default.

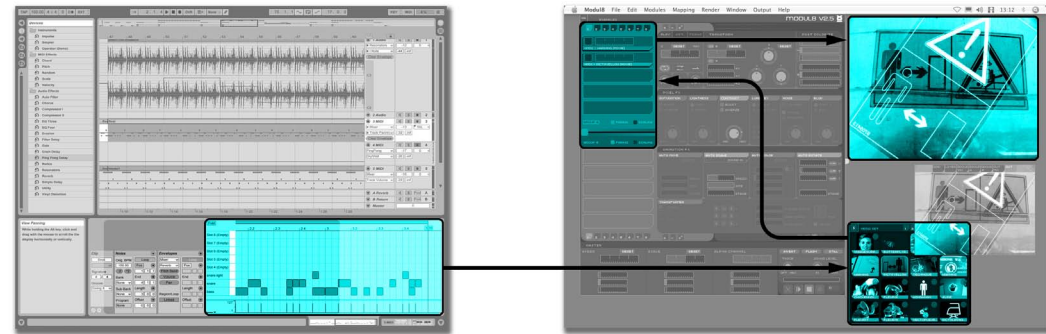


Figure 3-2: Image showing the concept behind audio-video synchronization from Ableton Live to Modul8.

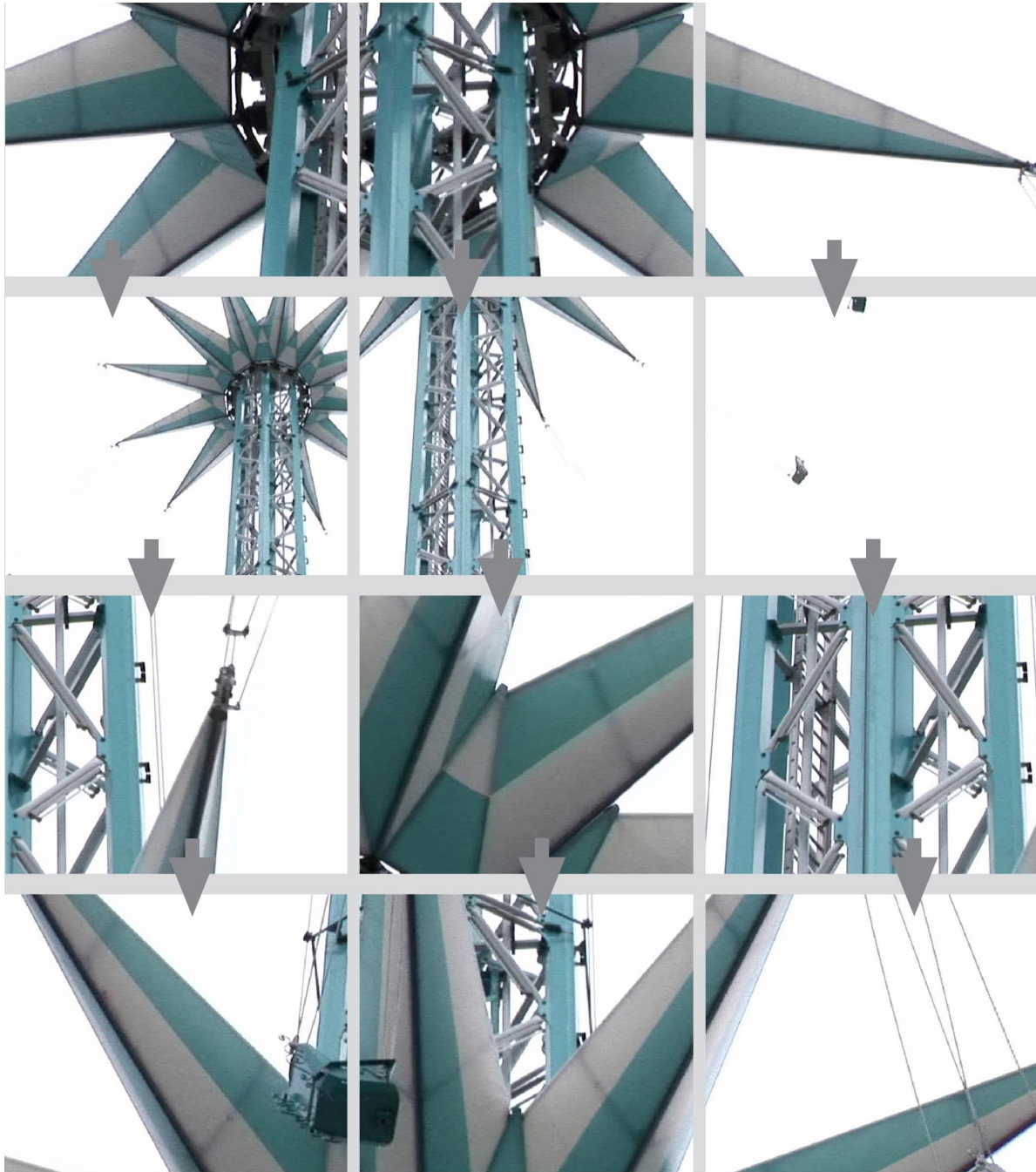


Figure 3-3: *Perspectives on Time* concept image courtesy of Heikki Ryyänen.

3.2 Perspectives of Time

I started working on an audiovisual performance piece called *Perspectives on Time (PoT)* towards the end of 2006 with Heikki Ryyänen. The visual themata of the work was centered on looking at cityscapes and the presentation of time from multiple perspectives. The aim was to be able to reconstruct/rearrange the geometry of the imagery and play-time of the videos both in pre-edited sequences and in live situation. We were asked to do a performance of the piece in the *Mal Au Pixel* festival in Paris in 2007.

The original idea was to construct a linear three-screen video installation. The concept image below shows the idea behind the reconstruction/rearrangement of the video footage.

Due to the constraints of the performance space in Paris, the actual performance system was based on two screen set-up (see image on next page) which we could use with two video mixer synchronized over MIDI. We readjusted the material to fit within the 8/3 aspect ratio of two 4/3 screens used together. We used three different visual feeds (visual sources), of which two were live-video softwares and one was a dedicated video player able to output two simultaneous image streams and being able to create one 8/3 wide image from two videos. Thus there existed many different possibilities for ways in which the overall image could be build up from several sources. Figure 3-5 illustrates, in simplified way, the possible routings of video signals to the two different projectors.

The project was an experiment in creating a performance system with the ability to mix multiple inputs (visual feeds) into multiple screen set-up in a flexible way allowing the feeds from individual visual artist to occupy one or both screens, to create whole or fragmented imagery and to be able to create these images from combination two feeds from two artist feeds.

We did only one performance of the piece in the Mal Au Pixel -festival in Paris in the spring of 2007, but this collaboration led to further work with the same work group.

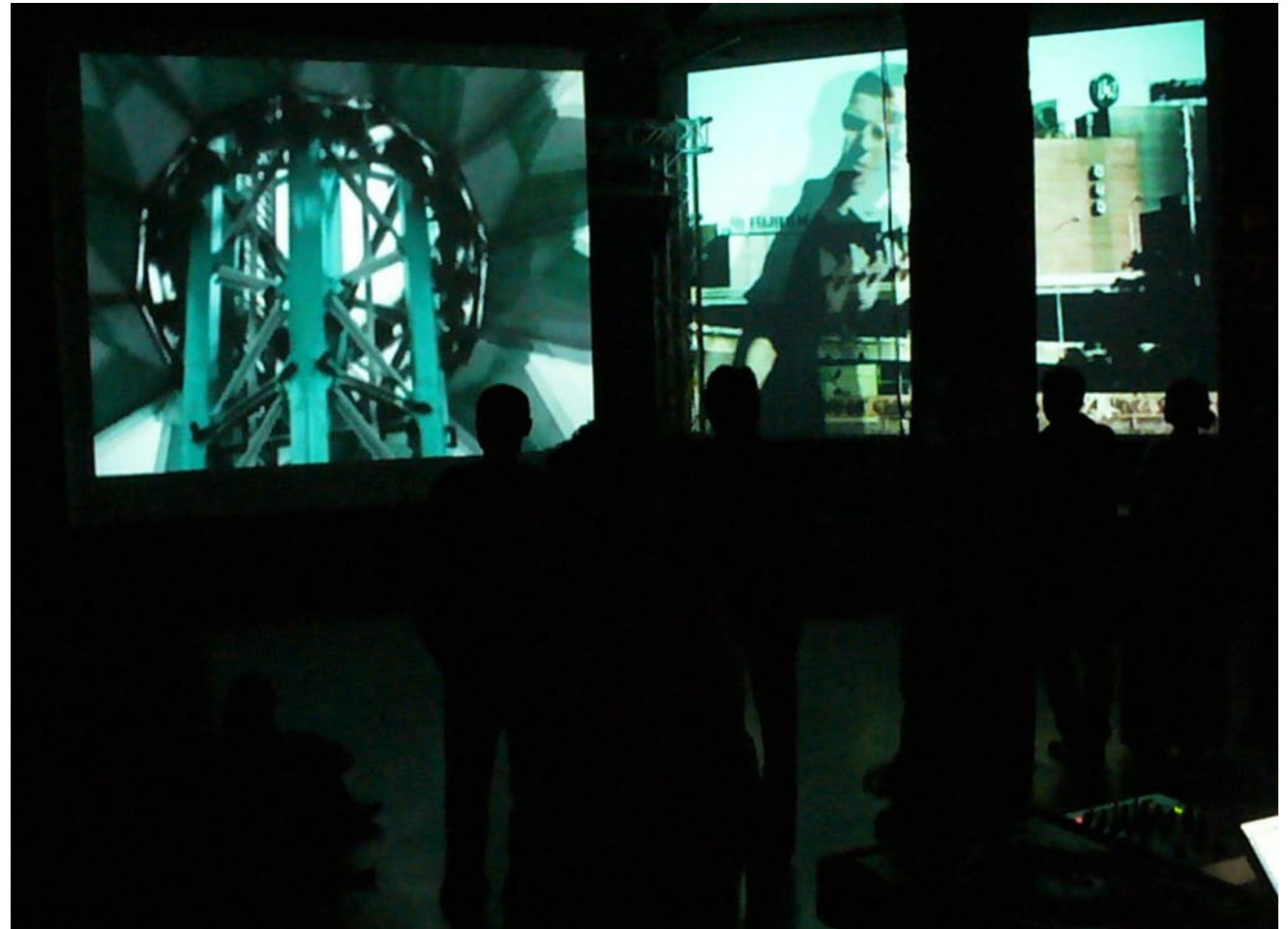


Figure 3-4: *Perspectives on Time* -performance in Paris, April 2007. (Image by Juha Huuskonen).

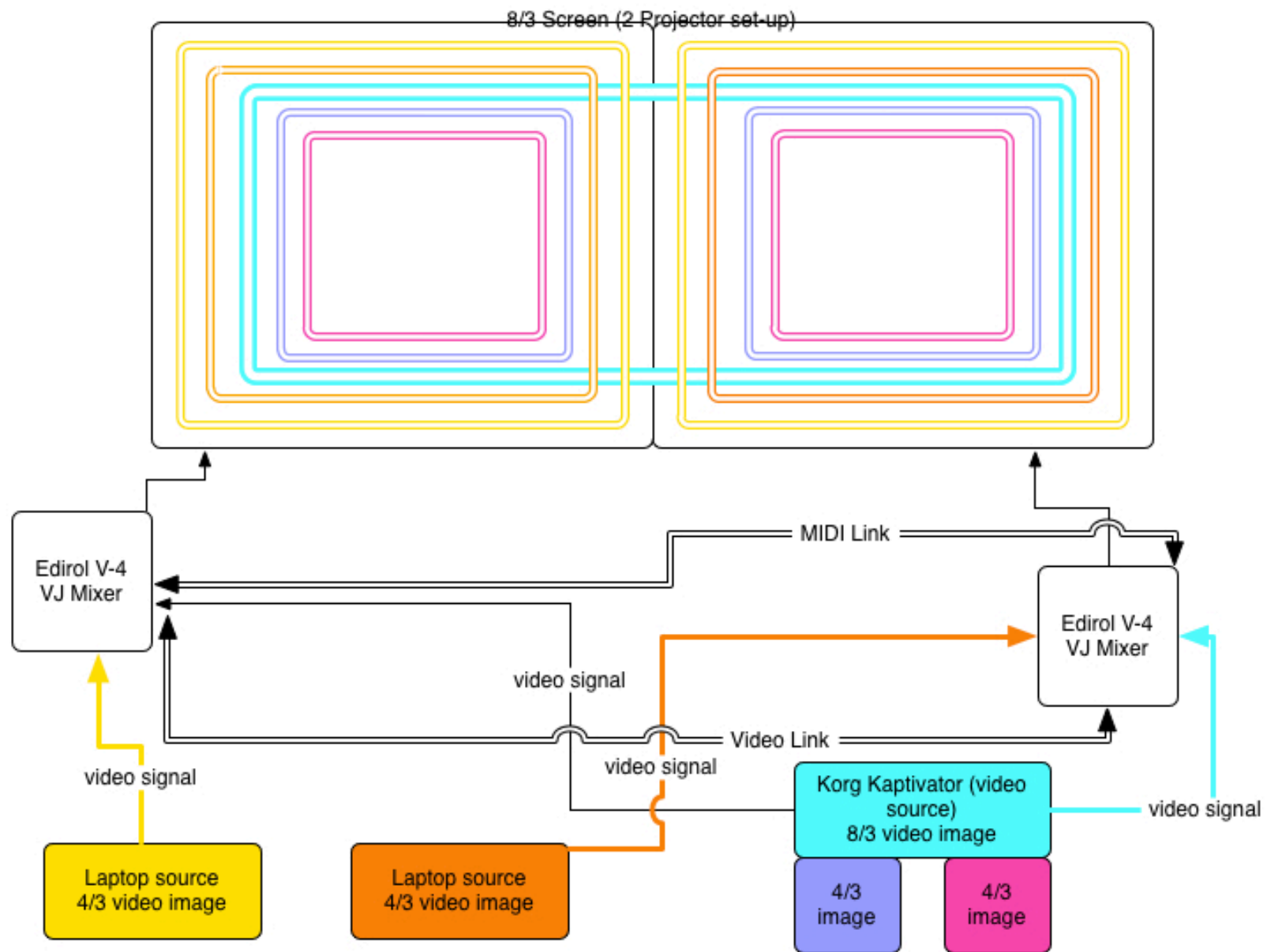


Figure 3-5: PoT schema of video signal routings.

3.3 *Aveneo* – Script for Experimental Short Film

The group resumed the work in the latter part of 2008 and changed the name of the work/group to *Aveneo*. We wanted to develop the work towards a more cinematic narrative structure. The script that we consequently produced was based on events evolving around single socially constricted main male character, whose awkward encounters with people and events formed the backbone of the story. The narrative form was not based on dialogue but instead on body language and audiovisual story fragments.

A sample script page is shown in Figure 3-6. The script page (unfortunately only in Finnish) shows the method we used to create synchronized links between different parts of the whole, the visual and auditory parts of the narrative. The different columns of the script followed sound and image and the column on the left described the general progression of the narrative. The experiment was as much about the working process and trying to find the right writing method for the film and for the performance, as it was about the aesthetic decisions regarding of images or sounds.

We wrote the main character's role for a dancer/actor with the idea that we would create a choreography for the whole film in collaboration with him. This work was to take two different forms, a dance based short film and live cinema performance based on the same film.

1 INT. KASVOT TYHJÄ HUONE		
Musta kuva.	Black screen	Hiljaisuus
Kuullaan hengitys—sisäänhengitys ja hiljainen puhallus ulos.	...	Hengitys
Pieni tauko.	...	Hiljaisuus
Kuullaan toinen hengitys.	...	Hengitys
Pieni tauko.	...	Hiljaisuus
Kuullaan kolmas hengitys—hengitykselle on syntynyt rytmi.	...	Hengitys
Pieni tauko	...	Hiljaisuus
Kuullaan neljäs sisäänhengitys ja samalla kuvaan aukeaa pelkät silmät.	Silmät	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
Seuraavalla hengityksellä silmien alle aukeaa symmetrisesti poskipäitä.	Poskipäät	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
Seuraavalla hengityksellä kasvoille aukeaa poskia.	Posket	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
Seuraavalla hengityksellä kasvoille aukeaa leukaa.	Leuka	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
Seuraavalla hengityksellä kasvoille aukeaa suu.	Suu	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
Seuraavalla hengityksellä kasvoille aukeaa leuka.	Leuka	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
Hengitysten rytmissä koko A:n kasvot valaistaan kuvaan.	Kasvot	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
Kasvot. Tausta musta.	Kasvot	Ambiensi
A hengittää ja hengityksestä syntyneeseen tasaiseen rytmiin syntyy uusia rytmielementtejä pienistä arkisista ihmiskehon äänistä.	Kasvojen liike	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
Kasvot liikkuvat samanaikaisesti rytmin kanssa.	Kasvojen liike	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
...	Kasvojen liike	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
...	Kasvojen liike	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
...	Kasvojen liike	Hengitys + rytmi elementti
Kasvot pysähtyvät	Kasvot	Ambiensi
Kasvor fade-out	Fade-out	Fade-out

Figure 3-6: Sample page from *Aveneo* short film script.

The script was developed mainly with three persons of the group: Matti Pentikäinen, Niclas Kristiansson and myself, within the latter part of 2008. In the beginning of 2009, production of the work was ceased due to family reasons and was continued a year later.

4. Production of *Arch of Neo*

This chapter outlines the conceptual development of *AoN* and the details the production process and specifies the technological aspects of the live video performance system.

4.1 Work Group

The main work group on the project is:

Sound/Music

Niclas Kristiansson
Matti Pentikäinen

Visuals

Petri Ruikka
Heikki Ryyönen

Dance Material Credits

Director & Producer: Petri Ruikka
Cinematographer: Tuukka Ylönen
Dance/Choreography: Anniina Jääskeläinen
Projected Animations: Petri Ruikka & Heikki Ryyönen
Costumes: Kaisa Lahti, Anniina Jääskeläinen, Petri Ruikka

Dance Videos Credits

Mumstep
Postproduction & Editing: Petri Ruikka
New Under the Sun
Postproduction & Editing: Petri Ruikka & Henrik Axlund

4.2 Conceptual Development of *AoN*

When one year later work continued on *AoN* from the dance/film project of *Aveneo*, we soon realized that we were no longer interested in the original project. We scrapped the idea of making a purely dance film. As a considerable amount of time had passed, and views on the work changed, we instead concentrated the work on new material for audiovisual work that would be named *Arch of Neo*.

Matti and Niclas had a set of songs ready which they had been developing from the earlier versions of the work and we decided to create a piece that would be based on those songs. Thus we moved away from a clearly scripted film into more fluid and abstract audiovisual work which was fundamentally based on the music/sound material.

We considered with Heikki the visual thematics of what we had explored within the first three projects, *PoT* and *Aveneo* performances and the subsequent short film idea/script. The main theme of *PoT* had been the deconstruction of urban landscape imagery and temporal explorations video imagery. We had been discussing earlier in relation to *PoT*, the connections between individuals development and societal evolutionary cycles as one interesting theme but we had not developed this theme to the extent we had wanted. We had devised in the

never-realized short film version of *Aveneo* a script which was centered on a dance character and where societal structures were to be exposed through dysfunctional situations. These ideas formed the thematic background for the development of the new dance character of *AoN*.

The details of the thematic development will follow in the next section. Implementations of the aesthetics and the reflection of the process are recounted in the next chapter.

4.3 The Development of the Dance Character

The idea behind the dance character in *AoN* lies partly in the key ideas developed in the earlier versions of the work and partly in the theoretical framework. The character is also based on my own visual ideas drawn from the music produced by Matti and Niclas.

The development of the mashup dancer character was also partly based on the concepts of collage and mashup. The cut-out method of combining unorthodox fragments into a whole can be seen as the method for the creation of the outfits and the movement material for the mashup dancer.

I wanted to create a character that had two modes of representation that presented two different conceptual ages or stages of being, both of which had a different way of acknowledging their relations to surrounding societal influences. The dancer was the most clearly narrative element of the new work, while the rest of the material remained abstract.

4.3.1 The Mashup/Collage Character

The mashup character was partly based on one of the songs from Matti and Niclas named *New Under the Sun*. The lyrics of that song can be found below:

new under the sun

*what was planted grows
with unexpected flows
and it goes*

*and it goes
let go*

*you you're one us
you don't know it yet
my table is set*

*new under the sun
what was planted grows
with unexpected flows
and it goes*

*and it goes
let go*

*closer, feel a little closer
feel a little closer
feel a little closer, closer*

*and it goes
let go*

(Niclas Kristiansson, 2010)

The mashup character is meant to represent youthful searching and outward-looking traits. Simultaneously, the character's identity was to be kept fluid, with a mixture of obviously fabricated styles and outfits. The aspects of the outfits and the movement material was to be matched with the specific post-production methods in mixing the three characters into a variable presentation of one person. I wanted the character's identity to remain in constant flux.

I wanted to bring these ideas out in a playful way through a system of representational cultural referencing and style mashup and collage. I wanted the styles of the clothing and styles of the dancing to have several different layers and modes. We created three different characters and three different choreographies for the song.

Clothing

The idea is that the cultural referencing is clearly visible on the surface of the character through the mashup of styles of outfits. The clothing had clearly identifiable connotations to a set of identity building blocks. These blocks are meant to be blatantly artificial. All of the outfits are mixed with different types of scarves covering the face of the character. The covering of the face, which brings an arabic influence on the character, is discussed below and also in the interview with Anniina in the appendix A.

The character in the Figure 4-1 has a mixture of authentic 80s style jacket and jeans with contemporary Karhu sneakers referring to urban dance culture. The character in Figure 4-2 has a blue



Figure 4-1: 80s jacket.

dress with lace patterns. The character in the Figure 4-3 has an original Japanese kimono jacket.

Covered Face

The fact that the dancer character is female and her face is covered creates a question about identity and cultural specificity. Because we see that she is a western female we can arguably assume that the covering is a choice. By covering the face other things arguably come to the surface; the aim was to emphasize the movement material.

The face could not have been shown since it would have brought a whole set of emotional issues to the fore which were not the question with the characters representation. The movement and the clothing is emphasized even further when the facial expression is hidden. It is interesting to note that the movement material itself can be seen as gender free.

I also had to consider that the dance character was to be situated in a larger stream of visuals and the abstract nature of the other material also influenced the design of this character.

The pieces of clothing do not reference only to eastern promises and exoticism but more importantly the mixture of cultures and the interplay between representation of culture and fabrication of it.

Movement Material

The movement material follows the same logic of the mashup as the clothing did. It includes a short choreography of contemporary urban fusion dance made especially for the song *New Under the Sun* and two other choreographies which were based on



Figure 4-2: Finnish vintage dress.



Figure 4-3: Japanese kimono jacket.



Figure 4-4.



Figure 4-5.

the foundations of tap dance and rock respectively. The idea is to mix contemporary expression with movement material that is clearly time based on specific historical periods, but that is also in active use today. Both of the historic choreographies create a drastic contrast with the music and also with the clothing, the rock'n roll choreography further emphasizing this concept, as it is performed alone.

The repetition of the movement with different characters brings forth the idea of multiplicity of identity. The covering of the face makes the viewer concentrate purely on the movement. We arguably construct our identities from pieces of cultural references, societal structures and from the flow of cultural signifiers of media and our surroundings. The idea behind the character was to have a playful exploration of this process.

4.3.2 The Projection Character

The second dance character works as an abstract visual representation of the interplay between the form of the dancer and form of the projections. The idea stems again from ideas of the interplay between individual identity and surrounding societal influences. This interplay was expressed through physical projections on the dancer's body. The projections can be seen as representing influences that come from outside of ourselves, and also as our own projections of ourselves as memory fragments.

The projections redefine the form of the body and add an artificial structure onto it, thus creating

another layer of exploration into the concept of identity politics.

The second character was not based on one, but on several songs. Different variations of the animated projections correlate with different songs in the whole performance. The link between the animations and the dance character was as

important aesthetically as thematically. The direct links between the projection character and the abstract animations of the work are discussed in detail in section 4.1 of the next chapter.



Figure 4-6.

4.4 Overview of the Production the Dance Material

The production process behind the visual material spans over an almost 8-months time period, starting in the autumn of 2009 and finishing in spring 2010. The production can be divided into the following sections:

1. Technical Framework

First we planned the technical framework for the performance so that we knew the specific requirements for the material, meaning aspect ratio and resolution. Specifications of the technical framework for performance can be found in the section 4.6.

2. Sketches of Animations

We created preliminary sketches of animations together with Heikki Ryyänen.

3. Scripting / Thematic Development with Anniina, Tuukka and Heikki

I wrote the script / thematic treatment of the parts with dancer character at the same time as we were working on the animations with Heikki. I went through several iterations of the character. During this process, discussions with all the different people involved in the video production proved to be useful and insightful. In the beginning I was working on the visual ideas of the dancer mainly together with Tuukka Ylönen, our cinematographer. I worked with Anniina first on the conceptual ideas of the character and later we started discussing the movement material in more detail. These discussions proved

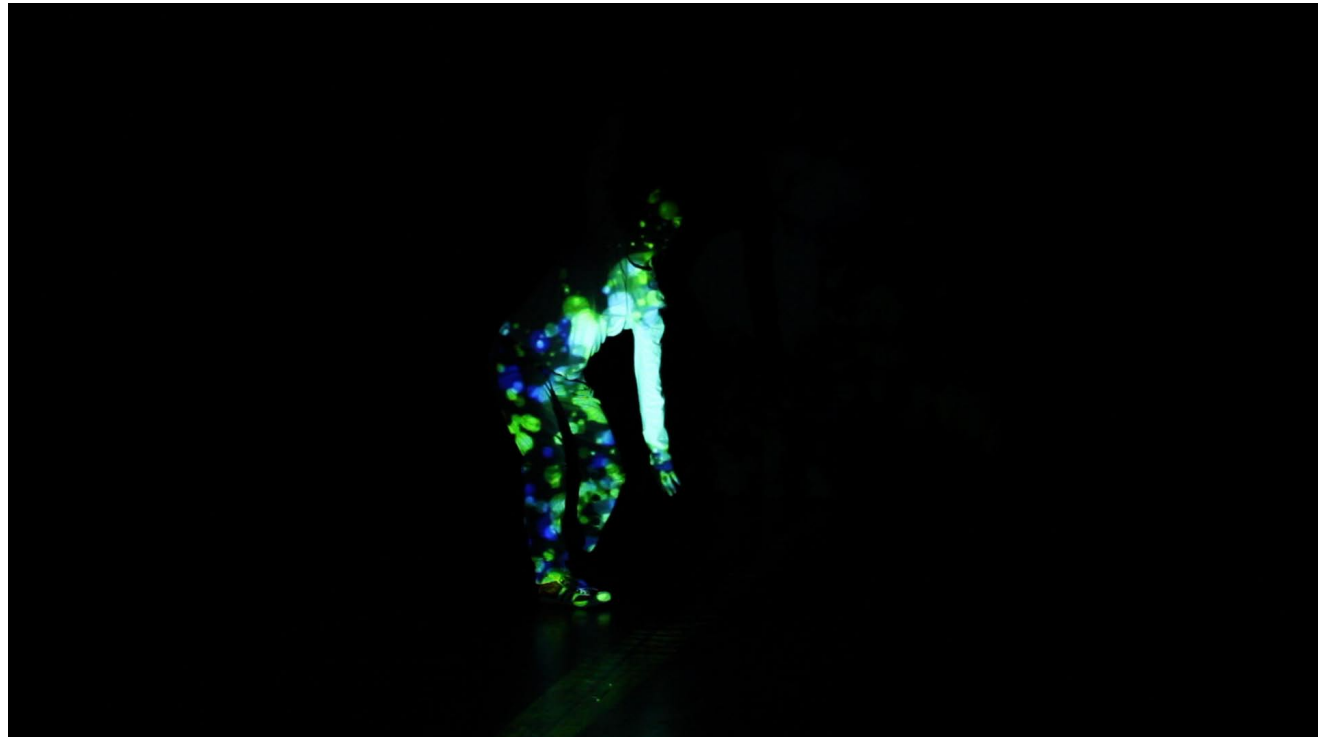


Figure 4-7: A test shoot for the projection material at the studio.

to be challenging but also very rewarding. More discussion about this can be found in the Appendix A.

4. Test Shoots

We did two different test shoots with Anniina and Tuukka. The first one was concentrating purely on the movement material of the mashup character. We needed to try to the choreography that Anniina had done with slow motion (60fps with the Canon 7D). The second test shoot was done in the studio with the projections.

The second test shoot proved to be especially useful

as we got a good overview of the possibilities of combining the projection system and the movement of the dance. We had prepared a set of preliminary animations for the test, some of which were never used in the final production. This was because we noticed problems with certain particle animations, especially when shot in slow motion, their movement seemed to “stuttering”. A sample image of the second test shoot above (Figure 4-7).

It was also extremely useful for Anniina, who until then, had only had vague ideas how the projections and her movement worked together. More about the process can be found in the discussions with

Aniinna in the appendix A.

5. Costumes

We developed the outfits for Anniina together with Kaisa Lahti who worked on the costumes. We managed to assemble a set of clothes from various sources with almost no budget.

6. The shoot

We shot all the material within one day. The reason we were able to shoot so much material in one day was a very detailed preparation. We had a tight plan and Anniina's extremely efficient work energy got us through the day regardless of countless shots of various choreographies. We used two synchronized projectors for the material with projections on the dancer. The projectors were placed on both sides of the camera so that we got minimal amount of spill on the background of the dancer.

4.5 Post-production

After the shoot I worked with the dance and other animation material to produce clips needed for the premiere in Kiasma. We had shot both of videos the dancer character so that they were easily separated from their background. The individual 16/9 frames needed to be implemented into a canvas with the aspect ratio of 4/1 which was the set by the framework of the performance.

There were several ways to create the compositions. They could be either composed into ready 4/1 images or they could be cut be used with the original size and implemented into the larger composition in

the VJ software. I created several variations from the shot raw material and also completely new abstract animations. The new animations I created directly into the 4/1 aspect ratio. All the work done on the dance material and the new abstractions were done with Adobe After Effects. A lot of the particle work was done with the set of Trapcode plugins.

4.6 The Technical Framework of the Performance

In the previous works I had experimented with different technical solutions for a video performance system. In the audiovisual collaborations with Matti Pentikäinen I had done the live synchronization of audio and video through MIDI interface and in the *PoT* we had explored together with Heikki Rynänen the possibilities of live mixing / live compositing of multiscreen set-up. In the *AoN* technical solution we wanted to combine these two aspects together; i.e. to be able to work with the Ableton live to create MIDI sequences for the video feed in live video software such as Modul8 and to be able to use multiscreen set-up with the ability to mix material from several sources.

We designed the set-up based on two key issues, firstly we needed to be able to mix three-screen images from two different sources and secondly we needed to be able to input MIDI signal from one sound laptop (Ableton Live) into two different visual computers.

We routed the MIDI signal from Matti's laptop

running Ableton Live into both video computers by splitting the signal in order to use the MIDI sequencing option for certain songs. The routing itself proved to be rather complicated as there was also another MIDI signal going to the other sound laptop also running Ableton live.

For the screen set-up we decided to use Matrox TripleHead2Go graphics expansion modules which create one single image for two or three different displays/projectors. The Matrox modules only output VGA/DVI signal and thus the signal needed to be changed into composite video (scan/convert) to be able to input it into video mixers. In the video software all three different screens can be assigned any picture wanted, or any combination of images with the widest being three screens wide with the aspect ratio of 4 to 1.

We used three Edirol V-8 video mixers in the three screen set-up and two in the two screen set-up. In order to mix three separate images simultaneously we needed to synchronize the video mixer with MIDI, thus we controlled all the mixers with only one of them. We created a rudimentary fader sequencer within the mixer set-up. Since the mixers have a pre-programmable fade-in and fade-out curve, by simply using different time values on them and then activating the same function in all three devices at the same we could create a simple but effective fader-sequencer for the overall projection set-up.

We have performed the piece two times, once with three screen set-up and once with a two screen set-up. The two screen option used only because of technical restrictions imposed on us from organizer

of the vent. The basic set-up is based on three screens. The Figure 4-8 shows a diagram of the set-up for three screens.

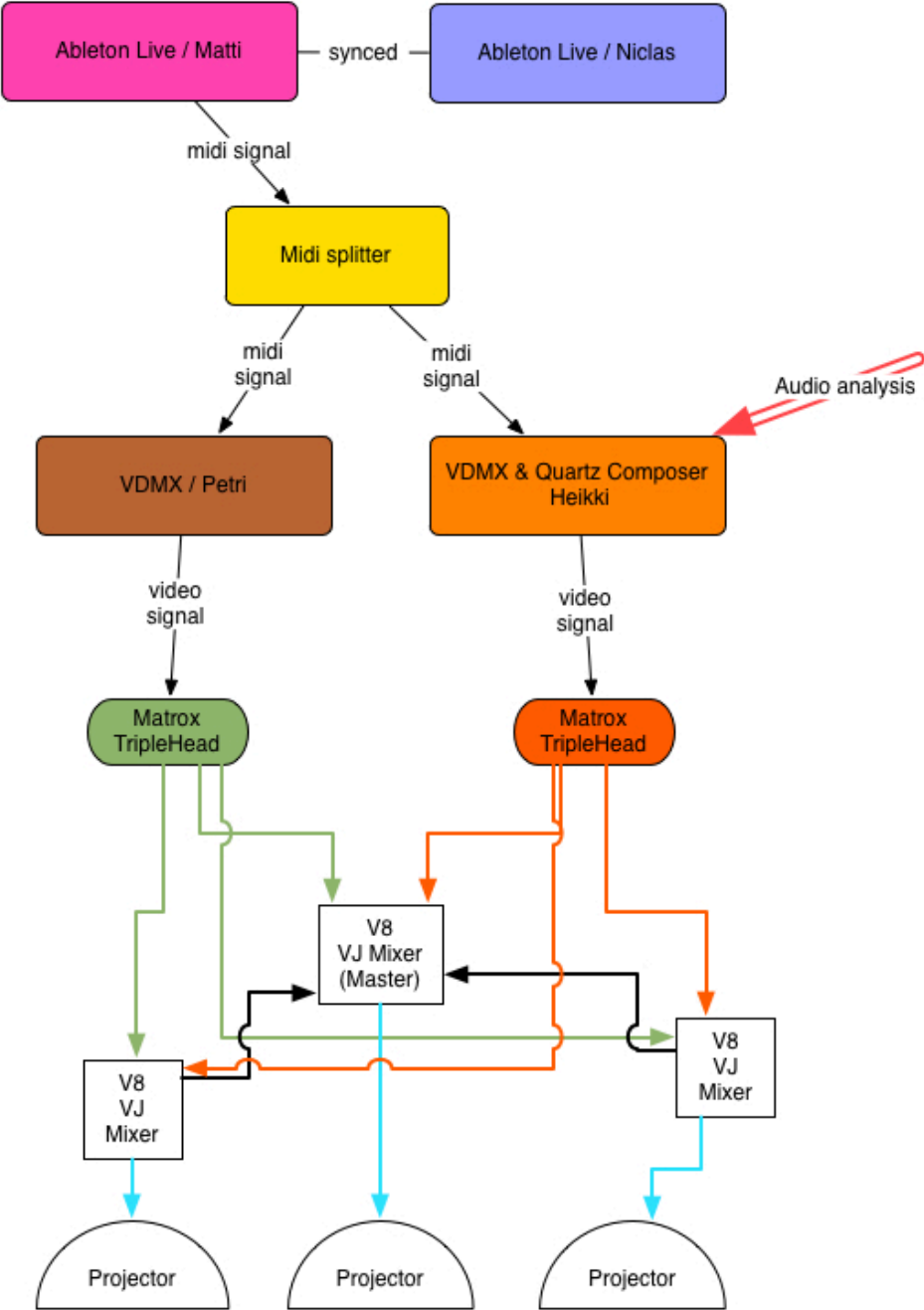


Figure 4-8: Arch Of Neo three screen set-up technical diagram.

4.7 Performances

The premiere of the performance was held in the Kiasma Theatre in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki. It was the opening performance of the Pixelache Festival of 2010. In the weeks prior to the premiere we worked on the material and also held several meetings and practices with members of the core group. In the meetings we went through the sound and visual material developed further the links between the two. The structure of the performance was set on the basis of a specific song structure and a set of key visual points. The structure of the performance in Kiasma is reaccounted in the next chapter.

We also performed the piece at the Flow Festival (Helsinki) in the summer of 2010. The screen set-up unfortunately had to be scaled to two screens which were even placed apart from each other. This set-up was problematic for the continuous image idea of the overall compositions. Fortunately we had created the visual set-up in such a way that it could be adjusted to two or three screen situations.



Figure 4-9: Matti and Niclas, the end of track *Raser* in Kiasma 2010.

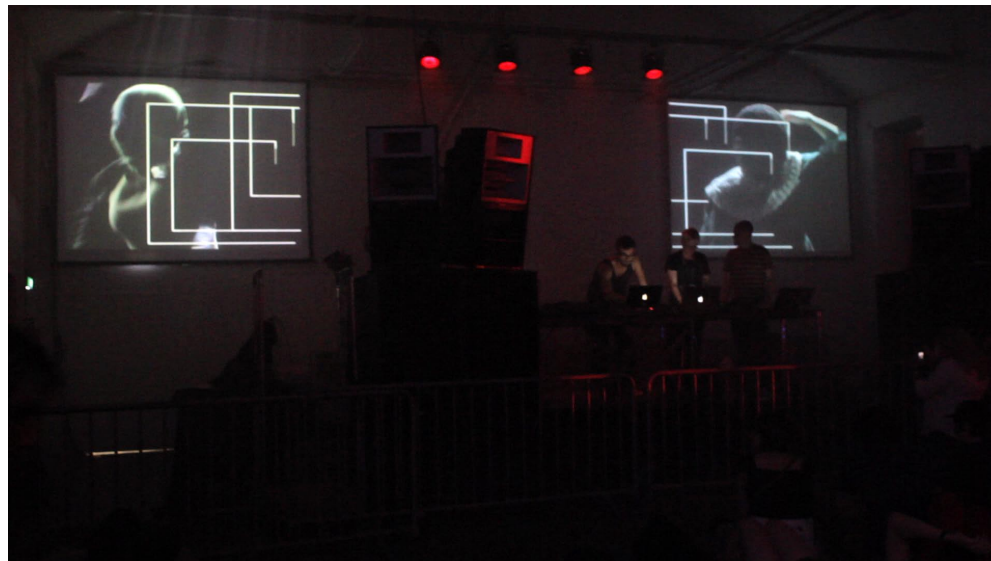


Figure 4-10: AoN in Flow Festival. Performance of *New Under the Sun*.

4.8 The Visual Structure of the Premiere Performance

The overall progression of visual thematics in the piece develop partly through the representational video images of the dancer and, partly through the purely abstract imagery that conveys feeling rather than a narrative structure. Each song has a set visual counterpart and the overall structure of the performance can be rearranged to some extent within each individual performance.

We have constructed a number a key visual scenes around which the overall structure can be modified. This kind of dynamic structure allows changes in the song order and even the changing of entire songs. The prevalence of abstract material in relation to the dance material in the performance renders the structure less narrative than it can be seen to be in the video works.

This section outlines the audiovisual progression of a specific performance which took place in the Kiasma Theatre of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki in the April 2010. Accompanying the text below, you can find a visual storyboard in the next spread. Larger images of the storyboard can be found from appendix D.

1. *Intro Song*

In the intro song, we used only simple geometrical shapes and lines. The shapes/lines evolved into more complex patterns towards the end of the introduction.

2. *MumStep*

The second song introduces the dance character. We move from abstract lines to projected lines on the body and the interaction of these two abstract movements.

3. *AND*

AND is a combination of fragmentary architectural imagery projected on the dance and abstract geometrical shapes which are inspired by map like structures and architecture.

4. *New Under the Sun*

New Under the Sun introduces the clearest representational imagery in the performance. The dance character is discussed in detail previously in this chapter and in the discussion with Anniina Jääskeläinen, the choreographer and dancer, in the appendix A.

5. *Gypsy Woman*

Gypsy Woman visually continues a theme that derives from a detail of a clothing of one of the character outfits in *New Under the Sun*. This is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

6. *Raser*

Raser is a continuation of the study between abstraction and the literal and purely geometrical fragmentation of the dancer character. The progression of the visuals discussed with more detail in the next chapter. The squares are a link to the squares in the beginning of the show. Here they move in 3D space and also interact with the dancer. The end part of *Raser* creates 3D imagery from the 2d surfaces. The last form is also a move towards more

organic shapes, and is, simultaneously the most spatial composition of the whole performance.

7. *SSound*

Ssound is a move to undefinable structures (nature) and organic shapes.

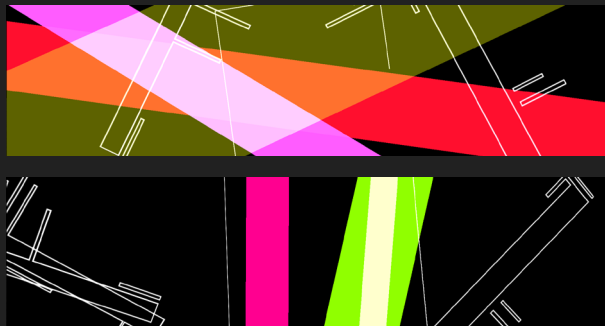
8. *WhyWhy*

WhyWhy is a continuation of the organic shapes. The organic shapes and forms are presented both graphically and as interacting with the dancer. In the end, there is a repeat of the squares shapes that were first seen at the beginning of the *Intro*.

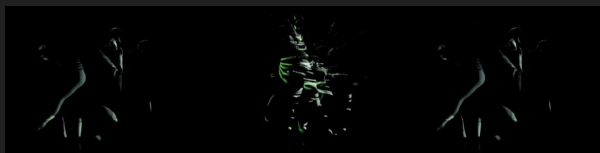
Overall Structure

The overall structure of the piece moves from strict geometrical and minimalist forms into organic shapes. The interaction between the dance character and the abstraction form the backbone of the work's conceptual development. The interaction is repeated in different forms throughout the entire piece. Arguably the overall arch of the performance remains on an abstract level and the thematics of the dance character stays more hidden than in the video works where she takes center stage.

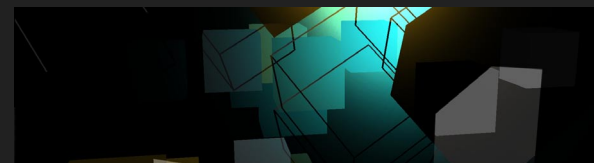
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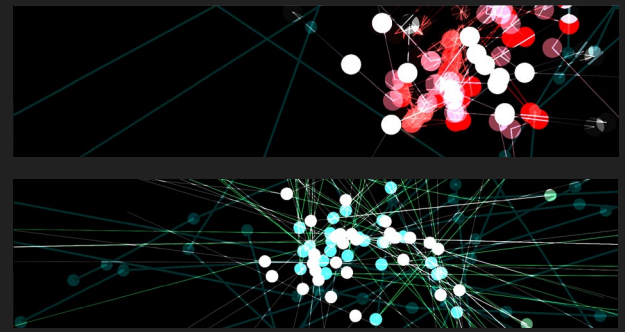
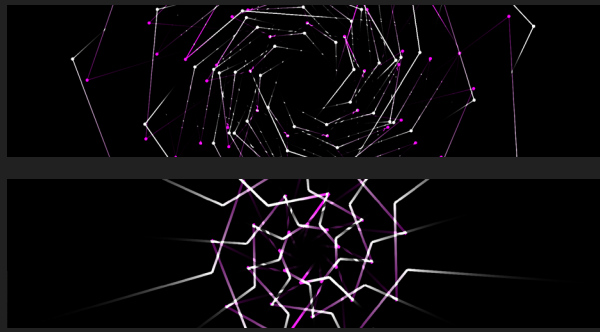
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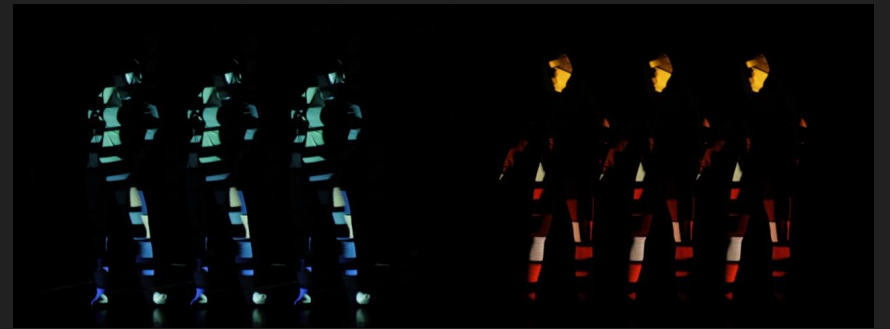
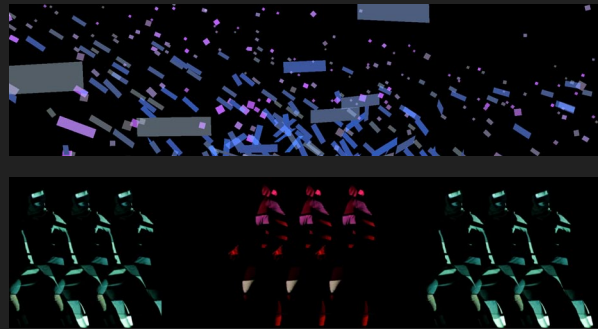
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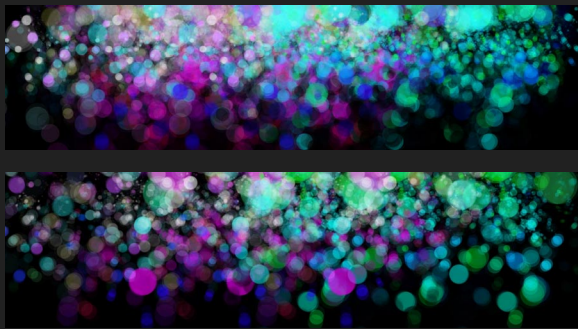
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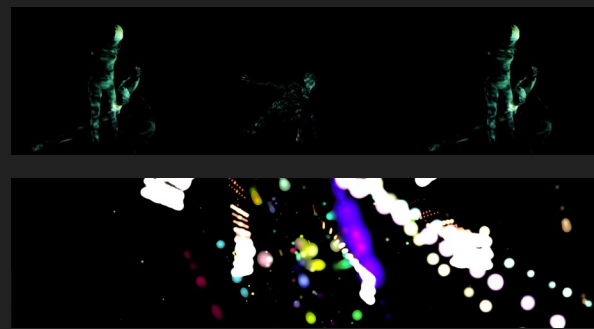
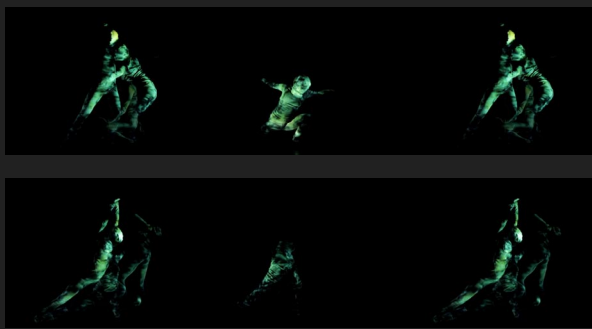
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8



4.9 Video works

The existing dance video material was used for the production of two independent but thematically linked video works. Henrik Axlund, with whom I've worked with on numerous audiovisual projects, collaborated with me on the postproduction of the video *New Under the Sun*. The two videos can be found as 720p movie files on the accompanying DVD.

4.10 Funding

We received two grants for the production of *AoN*, one from AVEK, The Promotion Centre for Audio Visual Culture, the second one from the Swedish Culture Fund.

5. Reflections on the Thematics and Visual Implementations of *AoN*

This chapter reflects on the implementation of the dancer character into the general visual stream of the performance and the points of convergence between the representational and the abstract imagery. The chapter also includes exploration the synchronizations of visual to music in the performance setting and a brief note about the aesthetic of the screen set-up.

5.1 Reflections on the Convergence of the Movement of the Dance and Abstract Animation

The aim with the dancer character was to explore the convergence between the abstract movement of the dancer and the abstract movement of the digital imagery. These explorations are most obviously apparent in the material produced with projecting digital imagery on the dancer where the body acts as the projection surface.

As discussed briefly already in the section 4.3.2 of the previous chapter the projections redefine the form of the body, by exposing and hiding parts. The animations movement coincide with the



Figure 5-1.

movement of the dancer creating two simultaneous movements, changing the body from being simply a projection surface to an active agent who defines the projections with her movement as much as her body is being defined or fragmented by the projections. This idea links to Claire Bishop arguments of the dispersed and fragmentary subject capable of recognizing its own fragmentation discussed earlier in thesis in the section 2.6.

In addition the immediate surface level of the two movement, the material produced with this

method was further digitally enhanced and edited to create even more complex compositions. Different abstract animation are fused with the movement of the projection character creating an additional layer of convergence between dance and abstract visualization. In the Figure 5-2 a fluid particle animation is set off by the movement of the character and by certain frequencies of music. It is an interesting circle of cause and effect, on the first level an abstract animation is projected on the dancer character thus affecting the movement material, on the second level the novel combination of these two

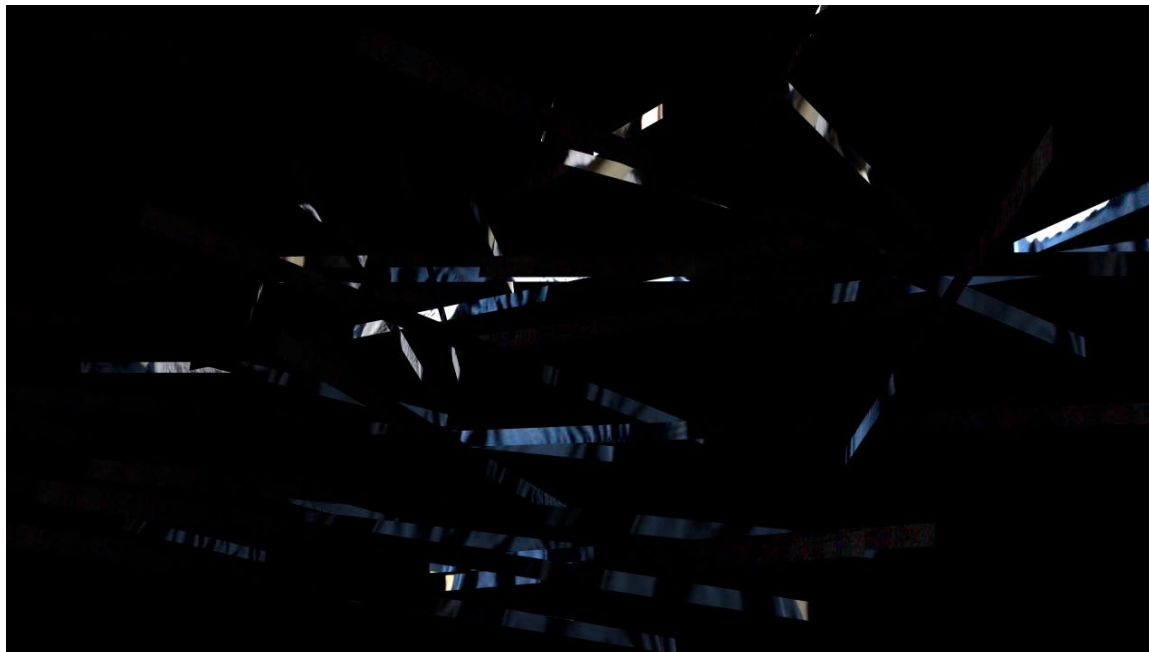


Figure 5-2.



movements sets off a new of movement in the space of the abstract animation. Both of these levels also react to music.

In addition to the most obvious exploration of the convergence of the movements discussed above, are also the animations of the mashup character. In the video of *New Under the Sun* the mashup dancer character does not only express the layered and fragmentary identity through the movement material and the outfits but also through the physical fragmentation of the image in virtual 3D space. Images of the of dispersion of the mashup character can be seen in the Figure 5-3 and 5-4.



Figures 5-3 and 5-4.

5.2 Visual Links Between Dance and Abstract Material in the Performance

There are a number of links between the dance material and the abstract animations of the performance. These links are meant to create visual cohesion and bind the two materials together.

A progression from the representational images into abstraction is shown in two sets of figures. The first one is shown in Figures 5.5 to 5-10 .

The white lace pattern in the dress of the dancer of the Figures 5-5 and 5-6 was an inspiration to the abstraction in the Figures 5-7 and 5-8. These two abstractions were developed further in a more complex web of fluctuating points shown in the Figures 5-9 and 5-10.

Laced material can be seen as representing specific European and Victorian cultural history. The laced fabric creates a web like image. Knitting can be seen as a social behavior. The abstract imagery of the Figures 5-9 and 5-10 represents the multiplicity of contemporary social networks that surround us. Thus the link between these two visual representations connects to the general visual themes of AoN which explore the interactions between individuals and surrounding societal structures.



Figure 5-5.



Figure 5-6.

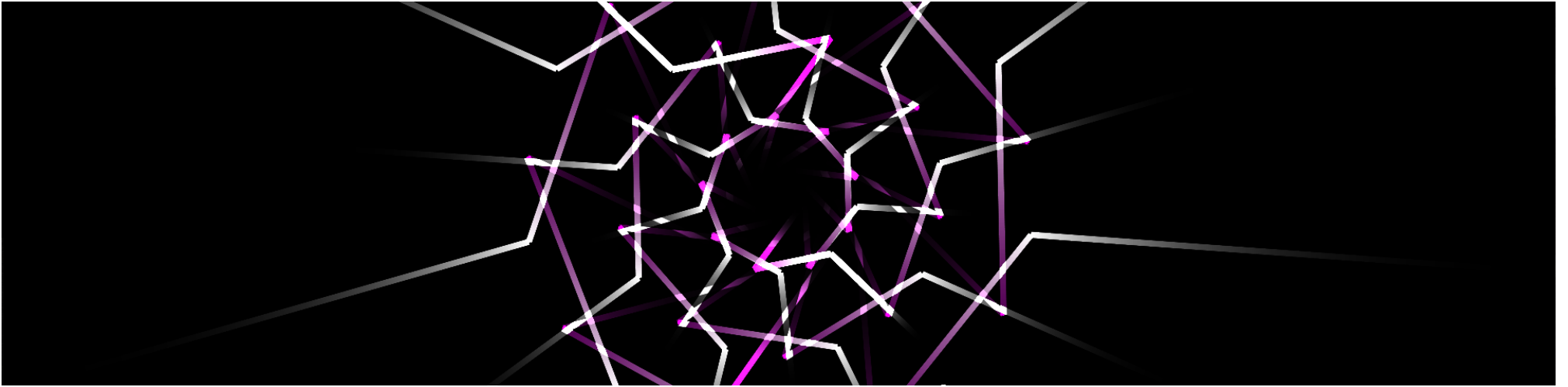


Figure 5-7.

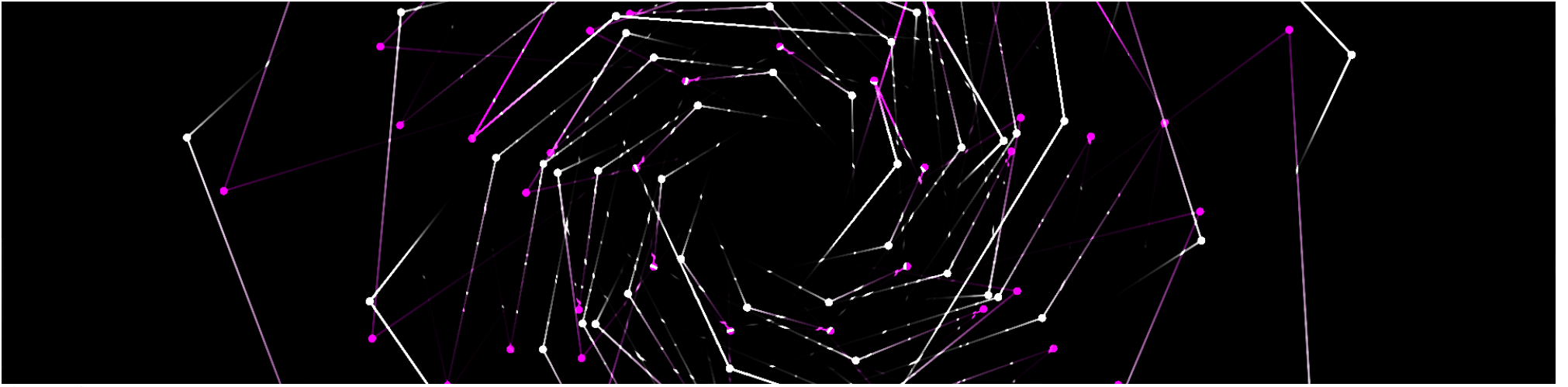


Figure 5-8.

The same graphic building blocks which are used in the dance material shown in Figure 5-11 are used in the performance also as a purely graphical layer (Figure 5-12).

The same blocks are further developed into more complex circular animation (Figure 5-13).



Figure 5-9.



Figure 5-10.

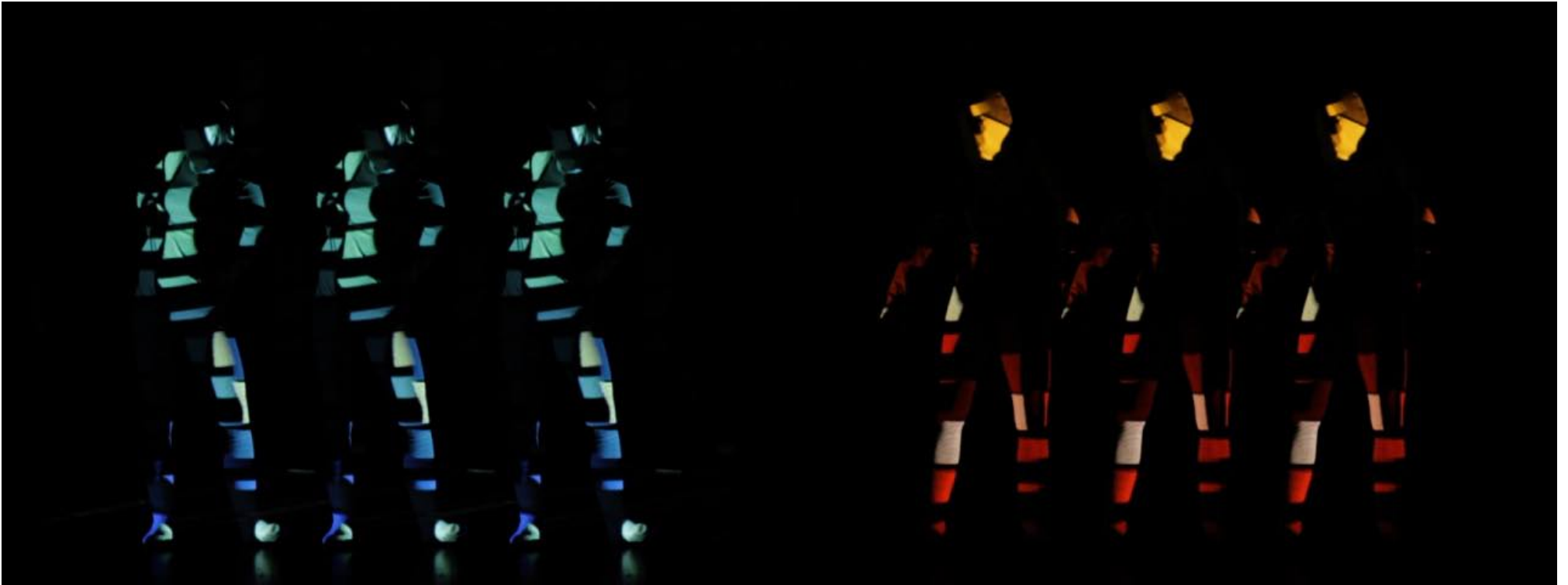


Figure 5-11.



Figure 5-12.



Figure 5-13.

5.3 Visual Responses to Audio

The audio/visual relations of *AoN* works on several levels and differently in the performance and in the videos. The concentration of this chapter is on the visual responses to audio in the performance context.

Generally the image can be seen to reflect qualities in music which can be narrative or abstract. Most of the imagery of *AoN* does not follow the sound in perfect synchronization with the music but rather takes certain synchronization points and proceeds onwards from there with its own logic until the next synchronization point occurs. The frequency of these synchronization points differs from song to song. The logic of the synchronization can be seen as relating to that of Len Lye's work, with the difference being that frequency of the synchronization points is lower in *AoN* than is often seen in Lye's work.

Videos

The synchronization of the image and the sound is done mainly through editing. In the video *Mumstep* there is a sound reactive particle system, where different frequencies of the audio are analyzed and their volume levels affect certain parameters of the particle generator. The sound reactive particle system used is the the Trapcode particular plugin for the Adobe After Effects software. In the video for *New Under the Sun*, all the synchronizations of audio and video are done through manual animation and edits.

Performance in Kiasma Theatre in April of 2010

The synchronization of the image and the sound vary from song to song. Certain technical key synchronization points of the performance in Kiasma Theatre are described here:

1. Intro

Squares are triggered by MIDI notes from Ableton Live. The MIDI notation follows a drum track created by Matti. Once a specific MIDI note is activated specific square appears and stays visible for pre-determined time. The color of the square is determined from a random RGB value present at the time of the MIDI trigger.

Lines are also triggered by MIDI notes from Ableton following the same drum track. The angle of the lines are determined by the moment they appear as the angle has a random generator running in the background.

4. New Under the Sun

The song has specific MID tracks for video for certain parts of the song that trigger video sequences.

5. Gypsy Woman

The symbolic representation of social networks reacts to audio through audio analysis on two different ways. First, the network consisting of larger circles spreads out if there is not enough sound. Then, if a certain volume level of sound is achieved on certain specter of the sound, the network pulls into together. Thus the network is pulsating to the sound. The network of the smaller circles pulsates to sound with higher degree of accuracy and frequency.

It takes into account much smaller changes in the sound.

5.4 The Aesthetics of the Screen Set-up in the Performance Context

The three screen set-up originates in the idea of multiple perspectives and immersion of the first versions of the earlier work *PoT*. The multiscreen set-up allows for the use of larger canvases for an overall visual image of the performance. The multiplicity of perspectives and the position of the viewer in an immersive environment are important aesthetic and thematic aspects of the set-up of *AoN*. In practice one 4/3 or 16/9 screen could also have been divided into three sections but then the resolution of one image would be compromised.

6. Conclusions and Discussions

This chapter begins by summarizing a series of discussions held with three of the key collaborators of the work. Full accounts of the discussions can be found in the appendixes. It should be noted that the discussions presented in the appendixes are not word-by-word transcripts, but are instead based on my personal notes of the interviews. All of the texts have been approved by the the interviewees.

At the end of the chapter, I conclude with my impressions of both the work process and it's aesthetics, thematic successes and failures, as well as try to map out further work.

6.1 Summary of the Discussions with Work Group Members

I asked all the interviewees two main questions:

1. How do they see the work process?
2. What are their impressions of the work thematic and aesthetic qualities?

Anniina Jääskeläinen (Dance/Choreography)

1. Embraced the work process with open mind. It took some time for us to develop a mutual language to work with as we came from different disciplines. The test shoots were really important, especially the projection testing, as it really showed her in concrete way the convergence between the movement of the visualization and her movement.

2. The work is very interesting. The material with the projections on her and the combination of the two movements seems extremely satisfying. She is also happy about the way the other dance character turned out. She sees it interesting to compare the same movements with different costumes and how this method really makes the viewer concentrate on the movement material. The absence of space is important in the video. In dance performance the space always defines multiple aspects of any given performance. Here the space is cut out even as representational imagery. Sees the structure of the performance less narrative; it draws from the context of electronic music and audiovisual performances.

Heikki Ryyänen (Visuals)

1. The work process has definitely been a long one as we have practically worked on this project (and the previous ones) together since the end of 2006. The overall development of the technical performance systems has been satisfying. Finds the method of working short times together over a long period of time problematic. Sometimes hard to find mutual agreement as people come and go. This aspect of the process should improve. Also more practice in terms of the performance would benefit the show even more.

2. Happy about the fact that we moved mostly away from representational imagery into abstraction when progressing from *Pot* to *AoN*. The dance character works as the most approachable point of the performance. The interactions between the dancer character and the abstractions worked in many parts as planned. The structure of the performance in Kiasma seemed to be working. The music is abstract, the visualization works well with the sound. The three screen set-up important in terms of immersion and also performance.

Matti Pentikäinen (Music)

1. Enjoyed the performances and working on the Aveneo short film script. Sees problems with the production in terms of scheduling and timetables. More resources needed for future productions.

2. The overall structure of the performance would benefit from more dance-based visual material, would create a more coherent whole. Certain visualizations would have benefitted from simplification especially in terms of the synchronization.

6.2 Conclusions and Further Work

Looking at the main objectives of the thesis, the exploration of the visualization of the music of *AoN* and the convergence of the movement of abstract visual music and dance, I see that on many levels the project has proven to be successful.

I see especially the convergence between the movement of the dance and moving image as an insightful element of the work. The merging of these two arts forms are discussed in detail in the previous chapter. These explorations also link to the conceptual framework of the body with the ideas of the fragmentary model subject discussed in the end of the chapter 2. Also when talking to Anniina Jääskeläinen, the choreographer, she expressed satisfaction in the seeing her own work taken into completely new forms and directions. Working together with Anniina was rewarding and educational and increased my “vocabulary” in terms of working with dance in general.

The other main objective of the work, creating integral visual analogies and counterpoints for the music of *AoN* has proven partially successful. Firstly the creation of the dance and other material itself can be seen as comprehending and understanding the essential links between sound and vision. The implementations of the material into the music has proven to be more challenging. The more concise form of audiovisual integration in the video works really creates a strong audiovisual whole. The performance setting proved to be most challenging,

as it is also most complex in its technical qualities and sheer scale of the required set-up. Certain specific parts of the visual performance proved to be reactive and complementary to the music, but there were also points where more work would have created even more engaging experience for the viewer. The discussion with Matti Pentikäinen showed that he shared this view.

Many of the abstractions were working well with the music and the links between the abstract material and the representational material of the dancer created web of interchangeable images that gives coherence to the structure. While I believe that the choice to go with mostly abstract material for the performances was based on a clear plan, I feel that certain structural improvements would created a more coherent whole. The more extensive use of the dancer imagery could weave the fabric of the visual performance into even more integral whole.

The conceptual and thematic framework of *AoN* was discussed in the chapter 2. It can be noted that drawing out the multiplicity of discourses and conceptual frameworks in terms of mapping the context of visual music is a daunting task. More work could be done in building an even larger framework for *AoN*. This would of course include a number of trajectories of visual culture that I feel relevant, but which were our the scope of this thesis, such as the development of music video culture and generative art. The section 2.5 about the body and its cultural implications in contemporary art outlined briefly specific starting points for the thematic development of the dancer character, but the chapter could also have been extended further with more in depth

studied especially on the difference between the representation of the body and presentational performance, such as dance. This would be an another interesting point for further study.

The technical performance system was taken forward, and its boundaries were pushed further in *AoN* compared to the previous works. This proved to be a very educative process. The thematic ideas in the previous works created a set of basic ideas from which I was drawing from when developing the concept of the dance character. Aesthetically the move in the performance setting from mainly representational imagery to abstraction was the result of many turns. The short film script of *Aveneo* we were writing in the end 2008 still remains a valid point of exploration to me personally.

In the linear video works the integration between dance and the abstraction works more seamlessly. I believe the videos based on the dance material exemplify the thematic concepts more tightly, which is not surprising taking into consideration the qualities of the media format. Through the two different processes, working with the material for the performance and for the videos, I feel that I see the different requirements of these two modes representation more clearly. The idea of creating a set of material that could be used for both a linear cinematic work and audiovisual performance was the basic concept of the *Aveneo* short film, but implemented only as one part of the *AoN* projects. I feel that these kind of tightly integrated narrative film/performances could and should be further developed in my future projects.

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Appendix A - Discussion with Anniina Jääskeläinen (Choreography/Dance)

An account of discussion about the work with Anniina Jääskeläinen.

Petri Ruikka: "General ideas about the work?"

Anniina Jääskeläinen: "I feel that this kind of work is new opportunity or forum for dance. Working together with visual arts and electronic arts. The development of technology also develops the language of dance. I feel that this work is ground breaking in many ways. I don't feel that this work can be seen directly falling into the dance video category either.

In live dance performances which have video element integrated in them, dance defines the boundaries for the video. Here the video defines the boundaries for the dance."

PR: "How did you see the working process?"

AJ: "The working process was different as it was not based on movement or choreography but on concepts. Often in dance works you start with the choreography and then build other elements around it. Here we started from the text provided by you.

What was challenging was the language we used. We did not have the same vocabulary. Working with other dancer and choreographers the common language helps. Also when a choreographer does not get his or her idea through to the dancer he or she can always show the movement where as here

we didn't have that kind of tool"

PR: "Yes, I was limited to trying to formulate rather abstract philosophical ideas into movement ideas by just talking and writing about them. I also felt that I would have needed more 'vocabulary of dance' in a sense."

AJ: "Yes. We had to create a language for us to work with. We had to get some mutual consensus on terminology. For example what is angular to you and what is it to me.

If you ask a dancer to do something, the dancer becomes the object and the viewer the subject. A choreographer can show what he or she wants with her own movement vocabulary, now the only choice available for us was so that I showed a lot option for you to choose from."

PR: "Which you were able to do really well and extensively since you have huge 'library' of material to draw from."

AJ: "Yes. Because I have an extensive background in dance, not only contemporary but also in urban dance, which is of course very improvisation based. It helps a lot.

When we were doing a lot of these experiments with the movement material I felt that I had more ownership for the material. The contemporary view in dance is anyways more geared towards seeing a variety of people as the makers of any given dance piece. It's not only the choreographer who dictates everything."

PR: "Yes, but here of course you had the double role of also freely creating the choreography as long as it worked with the plan for the videos and visualizations I had planned."

AJ: "Yes. It also amazing how we were able to produce so much material in one long day of shooting. I think it was possible because everybody had such a clear plan on the shoot on what they were doing.

It was really important for me to see the projections and how they worked with my movement. They sort of came a new working partner for me. That's why I think the test shoot with the projections was especially important. After that I knew the concept and it was a lot easier to do different variations for the choreographies and also improvise a lot. After seeing the projection test I was able to work much more independently. My working method in general includes a lot of improvisation.

What's interesting with the material that we shot was that it was raw material that you were able to mold into so many different directions. In a traditional dance video you usually have a very strict script which is then shot from different angles etc. When we left the studio I did not know much about the final format of the video that you were going to make."

PR: "I suppose you didn't.. It's more difficult to outline this kind of video work before hand as accurately as a normal video. The way I planned the material and the way it was shot was so that I could make several things out of it. First I needed the material to create clips and sequences for the actual performance and

I also needed the material to make the videos. Those two things can have slightly different requirements so I wanted to cover a lot of ground in one shoot. It's maybe also a bit difficult to outline the material since I also saw it as a continuation of material that I had already thought about producing for the rest of the performance. And of course it's also a continuation of a library of material and ideas that I have accumulated over the years of doing visuals so I had set of ideas how to extend and digitally modify the material to suit different purposes.

How do you see the difference between a live dance performance and dance used as video material?"

AJ: "This work of course would not have been possible to do as a live performance. Or the essence of the piece would change dramatically if done live. Like I said I feel that this work was not really dance work, even as a dance video work, but more a electronic art work where dance was one part of it.

Dance movement is always abstract but the body is always concrete. Also in dance the space is always present and you have work with the space, the dancers relation to the space of performance is very important. Look at for example the site-specific works... Space is abstract and concrete at the same time. The movement and position of the dancer and the audience always create meaning. The energy from the audience and from the dancer(s) always creates an atmosphere. We would have to find ways to communicate in the live setting."

PR: "Yes. The communication would be extremely important. How do the different movement

materials meet, the movement in the video and the movement of the dancer. We would have had to think about the presentation of the video in a totally different way. Also the production of the visuals would have been quite different. I'm big a fan of the work that for example Chunky Move has done with reactive visuals and dance. But for example the mashup dancer character would of course been impossible to create as live performance. First of all you do the same exact movement with the different clothing, incredibly accurately by the way, and also in the video we mix the imagery extensively and create the character really through the editing and postproduction. But what would be interesting would be to experiment more with projecting on live dance."

AJ: "Yes, that part could work as live. I also think it would be interesting to work with that on live situation. When shooting the dance material there are several interesting things happening. Firstly we can do a lot of repetitions which then allow for a new use of the same material, like we shot the same movement material with different clothing and it gave a totally different context for the exactly same movement. In some ways the movement comes out more pure when it is shot and framed and repeated. Also the way this material is shot removes the issue of space completely out of the picture. The material is not dealing with the space its happening at all."

PR: "That's true. It was a very clear decision from the beginning that the material had to be separated from any specific space. This kind of aesthetic decision was necessary because of the way the material was to be edited and composited but also because of

the aesthetics of the rest of the visual material. It was important that the character of the dancer is separated from any defining space. How did you feel about the two characters of the piece? About the covering of the face? Did you feel at all that the character as female was objectified?"

AJ: "I don't think it is objectified at all. The question, who this character is, definitely is presented in the material. Especially in the mashup character. We see that it is a western woman character so the covering of the face is an active choice. The character is an active agent. The clothing really comes to the fore since we don't see the face. The viewer doesn't think who's that girl but really look at the representation of the character."

PR: "That was what I always aimed with it. The clothing and its fabricated nature was to be really brought to the surface. If we would have shown the face we would have had to deal a lot more about the emotional states and it would have also created an unbalanced point of identification in relation to the whole structure of AoN."

AJ: "Yes, if we would have shown the face it would have been about me as a character. Also the movement material of that character was gender-neutral. It was not about the exercise of power. The body is always bound to express. Even when we are dead our bodies continue to express. The face always expresses attitudes. We always read and interpret body language and expressions. Also the movement of the character is more pure when the emotions are hidden."

PR: "We wanted to avoid a too imperative narrative element. The character balances out better this way."

AJ: "Yes. Audience always tries to get the points of narratives. Here the points are constructed differently. We make a pact with the audience, that this is the way the character is presented and they accept it and look at the other things which are presented in the material. The covering of the face is not the issue, but instead it allows for other things to come to the fore. The choreography comes more to the surface."

PR: "Indeed. If we would see the facial expressions in close up and also in slow motion the viewer would definitely pay attention to that."

AJ: "Yes. As mentioned when the movement material is exactly the same in different clothing configurations it really emphasizes the the movement. This way we draw out the movement in different ways, it leaves more room for interpretation."

PR: "How do you see the mashup character in relation to the ideas that I had with it, the idea that it is an urban character, it has the element of youth and has an outward nature, is looking for something, freely constructing the identity from all kinds of cultural references. The clothing really talks about this and so does the movement material."

AJ: "Yeah. The movement is angular. She changes directions aggressively, and also changes the identity. She goes through a lot of possibilities without choosing anything in particular. She doesn't have to

choose."

PR: "Yes, that kind fluidity is an important part of the character."

AJ: "Yes. She is definitely a urban character. The movement is accented and angular. City structures are geometrical and this language is also repeated and varied in the choreography. It has similar elements."

PR: "It does. The representations of city or urban structures are more abstract in this work compared to previous work we had done with the group. But we also used deconstructed city imagery also in the projections projected on the other character. The so called night character."

AJ: "Yes. The night character was also more clearly defined as female than the mashup character. The movement of that character was a lot slower. It works really well with the different projections that you made."

PR: "It does. I think the idea of the consciousness of the relation between her movement and of the movement of the projections work really well."

AJ: "Yes. The consciousness is well emphasized through the slowness of the movement."

PR: "The dancer character in general is the part of the performance with which the audience identifies mostly. We build the structure of the performance in Kiasma so that the we started with very simple geometrical shapes, then introduced the night

character with simple line projections, and then towards the middle the presentational mashup character and then again slided towards abstraction. This kind dramaturgy is not comparable to dance performances or theatre really that much."

AJ: "No. The stucture comes more from music, electronic art and club culture. The structure of the performance can be surprising and unorthodox, the performance still offers a rich audio-visual world."

PR: "I think it's interesting that we took the live element away from the dance, injected the dance material into the show, but used it in performative way in terms of live video performance. It kind of closes one imaginary circle."

Translated from Finnish to English by the author. Not a word-by-word transcript but based on my notes.

Appendix B - Discussion with Heikki Ryyänen (Visual Collaborator)

Petri Ruikka: "General ideas about project? About the work process? We have worked on this project in its various formats since the end of 2006. It's a rather long collaboration..."

Heikki Ryyänen: "I think the fact that way we worked on AoN for short periods during a longer stretch of time created certain problems. I felt that dynamics of the work group suffered a bit from these discontinuations in the work process. I think when comparing the production period of PoT, that work really benefitted from the residency time in Paris that we used to finalize the work. I preferred that kind of working method. What I also liked about PoT was the freedom of form which with the project was realized in comparison to AoN."

PR: "It was put together in a totally different way that's for sure. And I also liked the more improvisational aspects of that performance but prefer much the more constructed structure of AoN in the end."

HR: "Overall a clear progression can be seen moving from PoT to AoN. Technically we were able to develop the ideas from that work into a more complex system capable of more things. I liked the fact that we quite easily adjusted the concept of PoT from three screen installation into two screen live performance. It's important that we are able to adjust to various performance spaces. I'm happy about the way the aesthetics developed from PoT to AoN. That we used the urban geometry in more graphical way in AoN."

PR: "How do you think the dancer character works

within the overall structure of the piece?"

HR: "It's a very important element. It's important that there is this kind of variation of material and style within the performance. I think it works well with the generative visuals. It is definitely the part that is most approachable for the audience. It works visually and rhythmically."

PR: "I think also as we have tied to the character into to the same 'fabric' with the other generative and pre-rendered abstract material with creating those links between the different visual elements. How do you feel the thematics of the relation between individual and societal influences comes across in the work?"

HR: "The music of AoN is mostly abstract. There isn't much need to understand the lyrics as there is not much of them anyways. This is the reason for example any presentational imagery of cityscapes would not work, and the visual abstractions which are inspired by city structures work much better. The imagery remains referral and rather minimalist. The imagery refers to man made structures. I think it attains the right narrative level. It's important that the different visual elements, abstract and narrative, circulate throughout the performance."

PR: "How do you see the Kiasma performance worked out?"

HR: "I think the set-up created for the performance delivered the things we needed from it. It was logical continuation from the work done in Paris. I think we would have definitely benefited from a longer practice session in the theater with the complete

set-up."

PR: "The set-up was pretty complex and it was challenging to get everything running and thus took a fair amount of time. Also as we needed to change the projectors three times because of the DLP 'rainbow' problem there was definitely extra tension in the air before the show"

HR: "The three screen set-up worked well. It's important to me to move away from the conventional 4/3 one screen set-ups. I see that the Paris set-up already convinced me on the advantages of multiscreen set-ups in relation to this particular performance. I think spatiality can be explored much better with the multiscreen configuration."

PR: "Yes. I have always thought that the multiple perspectives idea is very important in the performance context of AoN. I especially think the vortex Quartz patch in the end of Raser brings out the spatiality aspect of the set-up. How do you see the audio/video synchronization worked in the Kiasma performance?"

HR: "There was a lot of elements where the synchronization worked well. I think that synchronized system is really what's needed in a performance like this. It is not necessarily very productive if in every show you need to think about every single choice, cut or composition. Of course we would have benefitted a lot from more programming time in Kiasma. In the future shows that's the thing that I would developed further."

Translated from Finnish to English by the author. Not a word-by-word transcript but based on my notes.

Appendix C – Discussions with Matti Pentikäinen (Music)

Petri Ruikka: “General ideas about the work?”

Matti Pentikäinen: “I’ve really enjoyed both of the gigs/performance that we done this far. The whole structure of the piece is maybe still looking for some final touch though. Something to tie the pieces more strongly together. I think that the visual material of the show could have been even more concentrated on the dance material. Could have done even more variations of that. Deconstruct the character and build things around it. Spread it out even more..”

PR: “I think you’re right. As the work processed we increased the weight of the dancer character almost throughout the process. But I still see that thematic ideas behind the dancer character are a little bit lost in the performance setting. I think the ideas and concepts come through stronger in the videos.”

MP: “From the comments I’ve heard about the performance in Kiasma the character became much more an aesthetic choice rather than conveying the thematics...”

PR: “I’m sure that’s true. But then again the aim was to create a character that moves between representational and abstract form. And also the music is quite abstract without clear narrative structure or points.”

MP: “Yes. The structure of the songs and of the whole performance are based on aesthetic decisions rather than building a narrative arch out of it.”

PR: “In the Kiasma performance we had some key visual elements/concepts which we wanted the situate in certain way, but the there was also a lot freedom in the structure. It was only important that we started from the strict geometrical shapes and minimal sounds and progressed towards the more organic shapes in the end. The use of the dancer character was structuring also aesthetically our decisions of the structure of the visualization. Also the representational dancer character of the song ‘New Under the Sun’ needs to be in the middle. I see it as something that the visuals lead into and then lead out from. It’s rather unorthodox narrative curve.. How do you see the work process?”

MP: “I really enjoyed the time we spent scriptwriting in Muurla. That’s something that I would like to do more. I think that in order for us to get that script totally ready would have taken a lot of work time...”

PR: “It would have. And we did make the conscious decision to move away from the narrative work towards abstraction with the Arch of Neo in the end of 2009 when we resumed the work after that break I had to take from it.”

MP: “Yes. We started from the songs not from the script. I suppose the problems in the production were based on trying to fit 4 rather busy persons timetables together and find enough time to work out all the details in time. Time always seems to of the essence in these productions. We should have had all the material ready earlier, had more time to practice etc.”

PR: “It does seem to be the case almost every time

before premieres. Bigger budgets is one answer but are hard to come by in this country. What do you think about the audio-video synchronization?”

MP: “I think that in order for the synchronization to really come through to the audience it needs to be simplified. Some of the more complex things just didn’t work in the end.”

PR: “I agree. I think there a lot of places where the synchronization should have been more accented and simplified.”

MP: “I would have liked to do even more synchronizations with video material. Trying to build things around the dancer character and synchronize that. More synchronization in general would have made the show tighter.”

PR: “In the next shows I suppose we should really work that out then.”

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